

THE GUARDIAN

A Literary Monthly Published in Philadelphia

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THE GUARDIAN

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ERNEST FIENE was born in Rhineland, Germany, in 1894, and studied abroad and here. In 1922 William M. Fisher, Woodstock, N. Y., published in the *Younger Artists Series* a monograph showing Fiene's work. In the introduction to this monograph, William Murrell said: "Ernest Fiene has the big solid frame and capable hands of the practical man: his countenance is open and his manner is candid, but his eyes are those of a dreamer. In his personal contacts he is honest, simple and loyal; highly sensitive and quick to moods, sympathetic and otherwise. For the rest, he is all painter. A romantic with a strong, unaffected faith in his own vision of the world untainted by any intellectual or aesthetic theories, he paints his way through difficulties that arise."

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HERMON MORE, is a young painter out of the Middle West, now residing at Woodstock. "His painting," Mr. Munson writes, "is very solid, tight and somber."

JOHN CROWE RANSOM is editor of *The Fugitive* and the author of two books of poetry, "*Poems About God*" and "*Chills and Fevers*." He is a professor at Vanderbilt University.

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L. T. HOBHOUSE is professor of sociology at London University. H. E. Barnes says of him that he is the successor to Herbert Spencer.

Of contributors to this number the following have previously appeared: A. Coralnik, Donald Davidson, Edwin Seaver, Joseph T. Shipley, and the editors, Herman Silverman and Harry Alan Potamkin. Mr. Potamkin is Will Craigie, whose poem "Between the Sheets" appeared in the January number. It has been chosen by L. A. G. Strong for his "Best Poems of 1925."

The Editors wish also to thank "Economic" of London for the opportunity of publishing the article by L. T. Hobhouse in the present number.

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MEYER EMIL MAURER, *Circulation Manager*

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The GUARDIAN

OCTOBER 1925.

IS WALT WHITMAN AN AMERICAN ?¹⁾

BY EDWIN SEAVER

SOME time ago there appeared in the New York Nation a prize poem by a young man named Eli Siegel. This poem, as all of you probably know, was called *Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana*. This poem, as you also probably know, excited considerable comment. It aroused many to factiousness, others to scorn and still others to an antagonism so strident that their critical faculties went up the flue along with whatever sense of humor they may have possessed.

Now there was a very curious thing about all this comment. And it was this: the one significant thing that might have been said about *Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana* was not said. We did not quite expect any revelation of our columnists; their province is other than that of common sense, not to mention critical insight. But when certain of our professional critics vented their spleen upon this perfectly inoffensive poem and its creator, without ever coming to the heart of the matter, we began to wonder why are our critics.

For it seems to me the one significant thing about young Eli Siegel's poem was this: it was directly in the tradition of Walt Whitman. Here was Walt Whitman's loose and often clumsy line; here was the same intuited mysticism linking all times and all places, all men and all things, in a harmonious unity. Without the precedent of *Leaves of Grass*, *Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana* would have been unthinkable. The miracle might have happened — for creation is always a miracle — but the acceptance of a prize poem is never of so rare an ether. Somehow, however dimly sensed, there must have been recognition of a valid Walt Whitman tradition

*) An address given before the Walt Whitman Birthday Anniversary Dinner in New York, May 31, 1925.

IS WALT WHITMAN AN AMERICAN?

that this poem should first of all have been written and that, what is far more remarkable, it should in the second place have ever received a first prize.

Here then we have a story in three parts, and if I were suggesting a title for this story I should call it: Is Walt Whitman an American? Here we have the faintly stirring consciousness of what might be a great and certainly native literary tradition seeking to sprout from a great and certainly native poet; here we have a poem that is a flower, whose roots are certainly in that rich and still uncultivated soil, and here we have our American critics grown suddenly so precious — though goodness knows on what grounds—that they are completely blind both to the existence of that tradition and to a poem that obviously was nurtured upon it.

Is Walt Whitman an American? This is, I realize, a rather extraordinary question to ask of you, an audience of Americans assembled in homage to one whom we all consider the greatest of American poets. And yet the question is just and our seeking a proper answer cannot prove unprofitable.

For surely none among you suppose that the America Walt Whitman sang of was the America he actually lived in, or that even you actually live in. Surely none of you suppose that that equality, that fraternity, that heroic faith in the new world, that sublime race of athletic men and women, those assurances of the Calamus, those whispers of Heavenly Death, were realities any more in Walt Whitman's day than they are in our own. Walt Whitman was not blind to facts; he knew only too well the fearful discrepancies of his people. He knew their sloth, their shallow currents, their fears, their betrayals of the spirit. But he also knew that the America of his dreams was an America of vast potentialities. He sang of the America that was to be. In this he was a great poet. In this we trust he was a great prophet. We trust, but are we willing to transform that trust into a challenge?

A poet is no greater than the tradition he bequeathes to those who come after. Those who come after can claim that tradition only insofar as they are able to assimilate it. Until we can assimilate Walt Whitman and make him a potent factor in our individual and national consciousness, he is not our poet.

This is the blunt truth of the matter and we may as well admit here and now it is not a matter of dithyrambics or of Fourth of July celebrations. Walt Whitman can be an American poet to that

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extent, and only to that extent, to which Americans advance to meet him, to which Americans are able to assimilate him.

We Americans are a wasteful — I suppose the Prophets would call us a sinful — people. I am not talking of material things. The War is over and we are entirely privileged to use three spoons of sugar instead of two with our coffee without any one reporting us as a German spy. Whether our material wastefulness is symbolic, is aside from the point just now. But in things of the spirit we are wasteful, we are neglectful, we are shamefully slothful.

We have not yet learned the economy of tradition. We have not yet learned that great men are few and far between. We have not yet learned to cultivate the rich soil they leave behind them in order that others who come after, less mighty and yet not less important, in that there is sustenance still to be gleaned, potentialities still to be realized in that soil, may take seed and flourish. If our adventures of yesterday are never to become the experiences of to-day, we shall never be a day older.

I look upon this business of a literary tradition very much like the building of a skyscraper. First we lay our foundations. These are our Poes, our Melvilles, our Whitmans. Upon this foundation we send up our skeleton and upon this skeleton we dress our building. In other words, the progression is vertical; we build upon the foundations that have been given us.

I believe we in America have already foundations for a valid and autochthonous literary tradition. But — and this is the whole object of my speaking to you this evening — I do not believe we are sending up our framework from these foundations. This is what I mean by the economy of tradition. This is why I ask: Why are our critics? It is the obligation of our critics to build upon what foundations we have, to flesh what ideas we have with a literature of vital comment. That through such comment the idea may become assimilated by their readers. And upon this framework of living comment can be dressed the authentic masonry of a great and flourishing literary tradition.

Only when all this holds true we can talk of progress.

This is the word I should like to leave with you tonight: the vital need of an American literary tradition for which Walt Whitman is so sturdy and so promising a foundation. Only with the full recognition of the growth of such a tradition, can we have a great American literature.

THE NIGHT...AND THE MIST

BY ALEXANDER JAVITZ

I.

THERE was always, before all things, this street...

Huddled between the gray steep houses, it seemed like an old man; a dark shadow of an old man, sunken on the curb, with its back against the walls of the tenements; a dark shadow from morn until midnight, a darker shadow from midnight until morn. The dim eyes would stare dully at the cobblestones; the tired, aged fingers would stray ineffectually after the sound of walking women, after the passing color of children.

Sometimes a madness would stir the street. The old shadow would grow suddenly tall; it would stumble with queer lurching steps down to the west, and beat black fists against the burning sky.

But more often it would crouch silently at sunsets. The days came and passed, and left their music and their blazon on the arch of sky beyond the Bridge. Within the black border of the soaring masonry and steel, yellow blades cut singing curves of scarlet. The sky would cascade down to the west, burying the purpling towers of the city beneath falling triangles of silver, and serifs of white and green swirling from gold, or leaping to vermillion, or drooping with the slashed stars of incandescent, already darkly-fuming amethyst...

The days went by, and flamed against the congested dirt, flesh and pain of the street; God flicked with a pretty yellow sword its hunched harsh shoulders... But night came always; night, and sometimes a mist from the river, thick and gray, and pressing its moist face against the lips of the men and women of the street.

II.

Within a house on this street, a boy shut his door quietly one midnight. He crept down the stairs. He stepped carefully into the grooves worn in the stone treads by the ceaseless shuffling and impact of uncounted footsteps from dawn to dawn. The stairs were old and grimy; they were old and grimy eighteen years ago when his mother, heavy with him, moved slowly down or up.

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Mist was in the air. It hung thick and gray before the eyes; it seeped through the flesh, breathed heavily against the face... The pavements were dull and wet with it; underfoot was a film of mud.

All day a thick, restless, swelling desire had been rising through his blood. Now it was pounding against his brain. He struck off in the dark direction of the waterfront. In the blackness underneath the huge arch of the Bridge he paused near the dingy cellar spice-shops, where all day long age-weary bearded Jews poured scarlet and green, brown and black powders into rows of small shining cans. The windows were shuttered, and the doors locked; perhaps it was only a fancy that a sharp redolence pierced the dank, dust-filled air and tingled his nostrils, and touched sharply his wet black eyes.

An old warehouse bulked ebony-colored and massive on the last corner of the street. A light glimmered here and there; nearby, he could see a stable with sweaty shiny horses, with the dim shapes of loaded trucks... Soon he came to the waterfront. It was pitch-dark. The purple in the sky that he had often seen here was now absent; nor were there any ships marching with the phalanxes of the clouds. He was alone. Only night was here... night, and a thin wind, and the mist moving across the river, and pressing its moist face against his lips.

The boy's eyes stared lonely and black into the river. He saw also the long dim wharves. In the morning, he knew, beyond the open hatches, Lascar seamen would be scraping the beaten-gray, the dirty-blue sides of the tired tall freighters... Words now moved restlessly through his mind, groped within his blood, laid whispering hands upon his heart. The liquid syllables of Ceylon and Sumatra, of Bushine, Mysore and Bagdad flared before him, beat burning heels against the night... Curved ships came quietly to his feet. They moved up and down in strange waters with the slow motion of girls' breasts in breathing. He saw harbors, iridescent green and blue, with depths of clouded amber, with sunshine a rain of silver darts, of golden slanting points. He saw the sea lift itself in the wake of distant ships with a tossing of a white, tangled and magnificent mane...

The mist was still in the air as the boy walked slowly down the riverfront. His erect slight figure passed like some eager deeper shadow of the night. Soon, he moved through the low dimness and the uneasy presence of dwelling places. He was conscious of the

THE NIGHT AND THE MIST

innumerable eyes and hands and bodies stirring beyond the blackness. Out of the obscurity came flickering yellow and red lights; he saw them and brooded on their mystery. Low faint sounds rose with a gray murmuring to his ears. The night was sharp with spike-nard of pain; it was bitter with the aloes of despair.

III.

Before all recollected things, after all dream-made things, were these inscrutable, brooding, huddled shadows, these streets: his street, and the others.

The days would come and pass. The dusks of weariness and time would fall stealthily, swiftly. They would descend like the falling of some dark snow; they would lie like some deep drifts around the consciousness of men and women. In the uncertain grayness, the days, the many and many days, dead, and dying, and new-born, would come each like the other, dingy, tired and bitter. Only at rare moments would they flare with quick bright and deep colors, or lift their vague shapes protesting for remembrance...

The Bridge now loomed before him. It seemed to push apart the sky; he passed across it as over some dim buttress thrust flying against the stars.

Thoughts and dreams of the Bridge came out of his memory. A white moon now brooded within him. A white moon that once sat mounted on a dark city. A city was once a riding army; the buildings were rearing horses, with claret plumes — with yellow things glittering...

Slight, lonely-eyed, black-eyed, he stared into the river, and beyond into the city. Moody, ragged men and women passed, and sometimes loitered. The boy longed to cry out to them, and to all the other myriad men and women below, in the distance, in the darkness. He felt himself trembling with myriad lips and nostrils. Words struggled against his mouth. Words of Semiramis, and of Sheba's Queen, of stones and city walls breathing and pulsing, of flesh hungry for many incenses, many rich ointments and powders....

The boy's throat was taut as a strung bow. The great arched towers of naked stone rose over him, and disappeared in the blue-black clouds. *My City, you are a beautiful God!* the cry went through him like a sudden hurt. He saw the city at dawn with strong white limbs; at evening all bronze and silver. With strange, solitary, haunted people, he came, plunging through drifts of ecstasy,

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to the city's feet. With beggars and fools, with a girl in love... A strange beauty moved within him. He did not know it was like an old song at a grave. Nor, that it was new and dishevelled on the winds. It was a still-born rhythm: a beauty that has never been, nor that shall ever be...

The coming day-break sang: *I am a point of gold. I am the color of lapis-lazuli. I am quiet in a robe of purple...*

IV.

The night passed, and the day came. Its long white fingers reached suddenly into his heart, and twisted his words into silence.

Below him, was his street: The black dingy roofs. The steep grimy faces of the houses. The old shadow huddled between the walls... Before all things was this street. And after all things. It clutched at his body with its senile, wavering hands...

Men were repairing a gas-pipe on the corner. A tincture of the sickening smell had penetrated into the house. The odor of frying breakfasts, the heady perfume from a loitering girl in the gloomy hallway, the unhealthy mustiness of plaster walls were mingled with it.

The boy crept slowly up the stairs. He slipped unseen inside the door, and pressed tightly his pale face against the window of the room... He could see the stretch of warehouse roofs. It was still black in the growing lilac of the morning; the chimneys stood up keenly against a rectangle of tinted sky. He knew that strangely and suddenly the delicate points of masts and the huge slow funnels of passing vessels were moving faintly beyond them; that like the soaring and dipping of flocks of imagined gold-tinged birds, the reflections of ferry-lights were trembling on the river within the fast fading night...

His mother moved noisily in the kitchen. The shrill sound of his name struck abruptly against his ear.

AMY LOWELL

BY JEAN CATEL

THOUGH we had corresponded a good deal, I met Amy Lowell only once. But that once, last Christmas, was enough to throw light on her work, which had so far kept a secret hidden from me. I do not mean there was the kind of adumbration that Maeterlinck's poetry (for instance) possesses, or the sort of obscurity that Mallarmé's or Valéry's poems boast of. Quite the reverse. There was in Amy Lowell's successive attempts at liberation a glare and a blatant trumpeting (even when she toned down to a fluting) that made her work very different from the symbolism of the French artists, her contemporaries and her models. The secret was at the starting-point: Amy Lowell's writing seemed rooted nowhere, in no man's land — *que dis-je?* in a no woman's land — so that the thing that anybody with a taste for reading wants and traces in a book, a personality, seemed forever receding and luring and vanishing in the brilliant arabesque of her poems.

A diluted personality, a childlike fancy for all passing shadows and ephemeral hues of the sky, a difficult imagination — she gave us that, when we needed and looked for a precise vision from the new world. Yet one felt that Amy Lowell had something to say, something to shout. And one was drawn toward her works, as they appeared. So there lay the secret. Her letters brought me no light. Charming and elegant they were, but as impersonal as her poems. It was not until I had seen and talked with her that I understood, or thought I did, something of her self. It is difficult to judge her work from a purely critical point of view. It may be tempting to try and establish the relation between her work and her personality — the very thing she did for John Keats, though she had, what we lack, material documents, and also a keen sense of psychology.

I saw Amy Lowell last Christmas in her home in Brookline. My broad-brimmed hat lay, like a mourning apparel, in the net of the Pullman, and, against the bleak indifferent landscape outside, I tried to picture Amy Lowell to myself. She must live in a curtained hall, with Greek profiles and nudes for her company. And

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an invisible choir must chant for her from a hidden heaven. Or she must have bought a genuine Renaissance balcony (easy to ship from Italy or the South of France) whence she must address the Boston crowds, lolling among the lilies, the oleanders and other impossible blossoms. Unconsciously my Gallic Bou-seus was wounded in advance. The Pullman negro received from my trembling hand a magnificent tip to win the unknown powers of this world.

But Boston soon loomed in the distance, then became real. And so did Amy Lowell, if to be real is to appear to the "sensuous" eyes and ears in an aspect totally different from one's imagining. Amy Lowell was the living antithesis of my previous conjectures. I must have had the look of an injured thing. (Indeed, she confessed to Malcolm Cowley, later on, that she feared she had frightened me. It was not quite that.) Amy Lowell was no Burne-Jones winged creature. There was no music floating around her figure — except the music of her voice. There was no Greek Apollo, not even a Byzantine Virgin, in the corner of her salon. Instead, a stately oak staircase gaped in the middle of a comfortable home and two stag-heads (or were they buffalo heads?) spoke in a mute language of victories over the wild forces of nature. And I slept soundly with hosts of angels migrating from my consciousness — or rather unconsciousness — towards that twilight where they say the gods have already sought refuge.

Next day was delightfully clear. Boston looked like the debris of an immense gem. A disciplined clean-washed old city with souls behind the Venetian or Valenciennes lace curtains. Brookline aloof and fragrant. And in Brookline Amy Lowell burning no incense. Her stoutness? A legend, that is an unreal reality. Her cigars? Another legend. Her mode of Living? Alas, another legend. Her work? The legend par excellence, for no papers, no scribbling, no typewriter, no open books were to be seen anywhere. And now the truth was beginning to dawn upon me. Legend everywhere replacing life, but a legend of strength, the will to power, the effort to master the real: the oaks smoothed down to a flight of steps, the buffaloes (for they were, they must be, buffaloes, not stags) killed and nailed, as in days of yore when man was powerful.

Amy Lowell's work is not symbolism, for symbolism is the deepest intelligence. In spite of its bulk and its wealth, her work has not the resonance of the cosmos. The hues and the perfumes that throng its pages convey nothing or little of the real perfumes

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and hues of the air. The air, the loveliest of realities, when every flower has faded and every star ceased twinkling. The air, the very essence of life; the air that surrounds, bathes and loves anybody (with the stress on body, as Mr. Firkins once said to me, speaking of Whitman.) There is plenty of light in Amy Lowell's poetry. She misses no opportunity of describing a twilight or an evening, and the range of her color-words is extremely developed. There are plenty of perfumes in them. She misses no opportunity of shaking bouquets of fragrant petals. The range of her olfactory terms is amazing. But the air, the mere sensation of the atmosphere (which, by the way, Robert Frost admirably possesses and expresses) is absent from her lines. And so is the essence of real existence, that correspondence which symbolism has sought to put forth in a new language, between the soul and the world. There could be nothing more different from Amy Lowell's art than Paul Valéry's.

But the reader will stop me and exclaim: This is negative criticism. Why look for what a poem is not? Tell us what it is! Halte-la! If it is not symbolism. Amy Lowell's poetry aims at being symbolism all the time, exactly in the same way as her mode of living aimed all the time at real existence. What is, indeed, the meaning of her exploiting the "traditional" symbols of the so-called aesthetic school of 1890? In other words, why does she bring into her most objective poems the exclusively subjective sensations of rainbow effects and tickling suavities? Or, if you will: why has she fostered in herself and in others the illusion that she saw into the inmost soul of Chinese poetry and, from that, why has she championed Imagism, that Oriental intrusion into the normal development of Romanticism? Pardon the question. The answer is: Amy Lowell has used (and abused) the symbols that were the poetic stock of Oscar Wilde, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Yeats and others. This is the reason why the younger generation of American and English poets do not read her. It is unjust but it is a fact. This is also the reason why Amy Lowell, who has understood and translated the French post-symbolists with so much gusto and accuracy, has little in store for them. This is, alas, the reason why she is already on the same level as the Victorians, whom she loathed because to them poetry was not merely "a thing of beauty." It was so, indeed, for her, but only in her thought, in her intellectual vision. It was not so in her creative vision. Her expression of it betrayed her sen-

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sation of it.

The deep reason for such a betrayal lies in what we have tried to suggest: she knew life only through symbols of symbols. A park screened her windows from the street and in the park were lovely trees and rare flowers. She led an enchanted life. She was the sleeping beauty of the castle. Life, the beautiful prince whose destiny is to awaken the slumbering princess, passed by unnoticed and even disdained. It is something to have been a legend, to be still a legend, and to have written beautiful legends. It is something to have seen the world as a floating reality from the battlements of Can Grande's Castle. It is indeed something to have been the champion of beauty independent. But was the cause for which she fought new? Certainly not. For every great poet, in all ages, beauty was beauty and not morals, and the world was what Baudelaire called "a storehouse of symbols," and not a material reality. Why then did she think it new? Why did she fight for it? Why lecture? Why recite? Why convince? Because she thought life was there. But life is not there. Life is outside our reason and our craft. Those who mistake the one for the other are no poets. Amy Lowell... but I cannot bring myself to writing this conclusion.

For, after all has been said, Amy Lowell *was* a poet. (Do not say poetess, she hated the word.) She was a poet not because she expressed the vast symbolism of the world, but because her expression, whatever it was, was rhythmical. And nobody will deny that rhythm is one element of poetry. Only, Amy Lowell mistook rhythm for the essence of it and worked accordingly. All her experiments are the natural outlet of that conviction. When she heard, one morning, a sentence ringing in her mind:

Benjamin Bailey, Benjamin Bailey,

why did you get up at the stroke of three?

she mistook it for poetry. And she thought there lay the germ of a poem. She then wrote one of her Legends. Now, if you read it, what is there in the long succession of stanzas? A stale theme beautifully developed. Development, that is her secret. Had she not possessed the sense of rhythm she would not have produced one line worth remembering. But she did possess it. And her developments are the best of her bulky work. I can't help thinking that her longest poems (in polyphonic prose) are by far the most original portion of it and the pieces will be readable forever. They have won her consideration and fame and have undeniably enriched English po-

AMY LOWELL

etry. If she has not created one note as the greatest have done, Spenser, Byron, Keats, Whitman, Verlaine, Baudelaire, she has taught the world orchestration. Had she lived longer she might have discovered, together with her own self, the original expression of its nature: not development, but truth. As it stands, her work is a model of faultless construction but its construction is made from the outside.

And I again descend the oaken steps and again the buffaloes stare at me with vacant, slavish eyes. The will to power — here it is again, expressing itself in the poet's voice, with its insinuating song. Amy Lowell reads her *Yankee Poems* where she expresses, in the manner of Robert Browning, the tragedy of New England. And, while she reads, a thought crosses my mind: Is she herself different from the men and women . . . and ghosts . . . of her *Poems*? She has the will to power, it is true, but has she freed her heart and mind from the terrors and the anguish that dwell in the inmost soul of her farmers? Is she the liberated disembodied mind whose only joy is the pagan rhythm of the universe? Her work will scarcely give us the answer, no more than Emerson's, Hawthorne's, Whitman's have answered the question. For it is typical of New England to shelter ghosts and at the same time deny their existence. For Amy Lowell is, after all, a Puritan of New England whose will to power exerted itself on beauty instead of morals, metaphysics or the conduct of life. Her efforts at self-expression through rhythm—because she believed rhythm was the only independent thing in the world—must not blind us to the soul that was striving to disentangle itself from the very laws of words and meter. In her first book she wrote:

The laws exact. I must obey.

Was there anything more true to New England tradition? Amy Lowell never strayed very far from it, in spite of her brocades, the rustling silks, and the scattered flowers under which she hid her passionate heart. "I am Amy Lowell of Brookline, Mass.," she used to say when she was a little girl. She remained that little girl. She kept her pride of her vaguely felt tradition. She used the whole universe for a toy. She bore the Victorians, her older neighbors, and the rising generation of poets, her younger neighbors, the same grudge. They both stood in her way to conquest. Children will be masters.

She has been great. She might have been of the greatest.

NIGGER GAL

BY JAMES MARLOW

DAYLIGHT dripped into the area and barely reached the bottom. And in bed on the second floor she lay still, cursing it. She had been wrenched out of peace by a clock and now she was awake: she was awake to the light. If it had a throat she would bite her way past it. It was like a white man covered with stinking sweat who climbed through that window every morning to tear off her clothes and stare at her body. She looked down the length of her body: under the sheet her stomach and legs showed, enormous and trembling.

Like a cow ripping grass she swung her heavy head toward the wall. Her hands were soft and damp: she ground them on her eyes. Blackness and little yellow moons showed blackness and darkness and little yellow moons. Darkness was there. Darkness was good. It was sweet and good. It was like her — black. It was black and good. It was soft. It covered — her, all over, everything: her, her fat, her fat. She twisted nearer to the wall.

The bed cried woodenly. Somewhere in the area a clock spilled hard beads of sound. Her stomach shivered. Her teeth were a sharp protest against the gray dawn.

Her ankles were fans over her low shoes: the fans sprouted quickly into the black cave of her skirt. Her skirt swung. She swung. Rocked, rather. Her stomach shivered. Her breasts shivered, poised, caught the motion, swung, danced. The street was a shining thinness against her lunging fat. Men had eyes. Men were eyes. Little eyes. Little eyes watched, smacked joyfully, perted for the broad prow of her breasts and her determination. She edged through laughter. Laughter sizzled on her shoulders, on her spine. Laughter was a chain: its rusty links rubbed sides down the avenue.

A white child loomed — “'Lo, fat!” — sank behind the round rim of her shoulder. The child was a white stain on her lunging fat. — He has no belly; stick legs. I was no child; all belly. —

At five she had been all belly and stomach — aggressive as a derby. Then her tiny cotton shirt had hung on her like a bell: in

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it her body was a black soft tongue saying nothing. Now at twenty-five her clothes hung on her like a bell.

Women, young girls loomed, sank behind the rim of her shoulder: they were glistering knives past her fatness; they had laughter — like paper bags on a windy street.

She reached the laundry.

A Pole—a pale string of a woman, halffrayed through—worked the other tub. She rose, bowed, breathed, plunged. Her elbow had a dry grin: twenty times in one minute the elbow grinned and straightened its face. The Pole coughed, lifted high on her toes to cough. Even so. The negress hated her for that bright cough and that lift.

"Hey, miss — time ter start."

The foreman had a hard chest and wooden skin. His fists on his hips were stones on stones.

"Time ter start."

She eased against the tub and plunged.

Noon. The Pole penetrated a bottle of milk with her thumb, held the cold snout to her mouth. The milk swelled the ropes in her throat, twisted them, was gone. She snapped down four sandwiches. Her eyes sucked this new strength in her hands. Like a man she swung toward the negress: her tongue cleaned the last of the milk off her faded moustache: she winked: she said "Id's good."

Silence and minutes. The foreman cursed and mouthed the heel of his hand: he picked it with a pin: he shook it away and saw the two women.

"Kin yuh git it out?" he asked, showing his hand: a splinter was under the skin in its heel.

Joyfully the negress took the hard hand, drew it close. It was strong life in her fat hands. It sang in her fat hands. Her fingers sought the wood, fumbled, flattened on the blue flesh. Her fingers were wet cigar butts grinding down on the singing blue curve.

The Pole said "Led me."

Her knuckles were red knots on white cords. She had yellow nails. The nails dove once and came up.

She rolled the wood on her hand: "Liddle dthing."

The negress said "His hand is ha'd."

The other rolled the wood: "O yes. So's dis."

Six o'clock. The women backed out of the steam, dried their

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hands, got their hats. And the return began: lunge and plow: more knives, shaded now and quicker: little eyes: the lamps opened their eyes: the houses opened their eyes.

White men on a corner saw her and waited: they flattened against a saloon window to wait. They loomed. One man chanted, slowly, at a housetop:

"Nigger gal, nigger gal, aint she nice 'n' sweet?"

"Nigger gal, nigger gal, aint she nice 'n' sweet?"

A friend helped:

"Well, she aint so much ter look at, boys;

"But, boys, she's just aaaaalllll *meat!*"

The men choked, fell helpless against the window. The street lamps grew fat in the face. All the little eyes smacked joyfully. All the little eyes smacked joyfully, parted for her broad prow.

She got a private wash and went home.

There with the door and the window shades, she shut her self in. Black people, straining for air in the summer night, covered the stoops across the way: she shut out the black people and the air and swung over the clothes in the tub: swung up, swung down for four hours.

Over her wet back the gaslight whistled thickly. Swing. Swing up, swing down. The gaslight whistled thickly. At last it toppled and ran before a wind that doubled the shades. The negress straightened. Rain shuffled on the street, on the windows, on the sills. Softly the negress strangled the gas, flung up the windows, stood still by one of them.

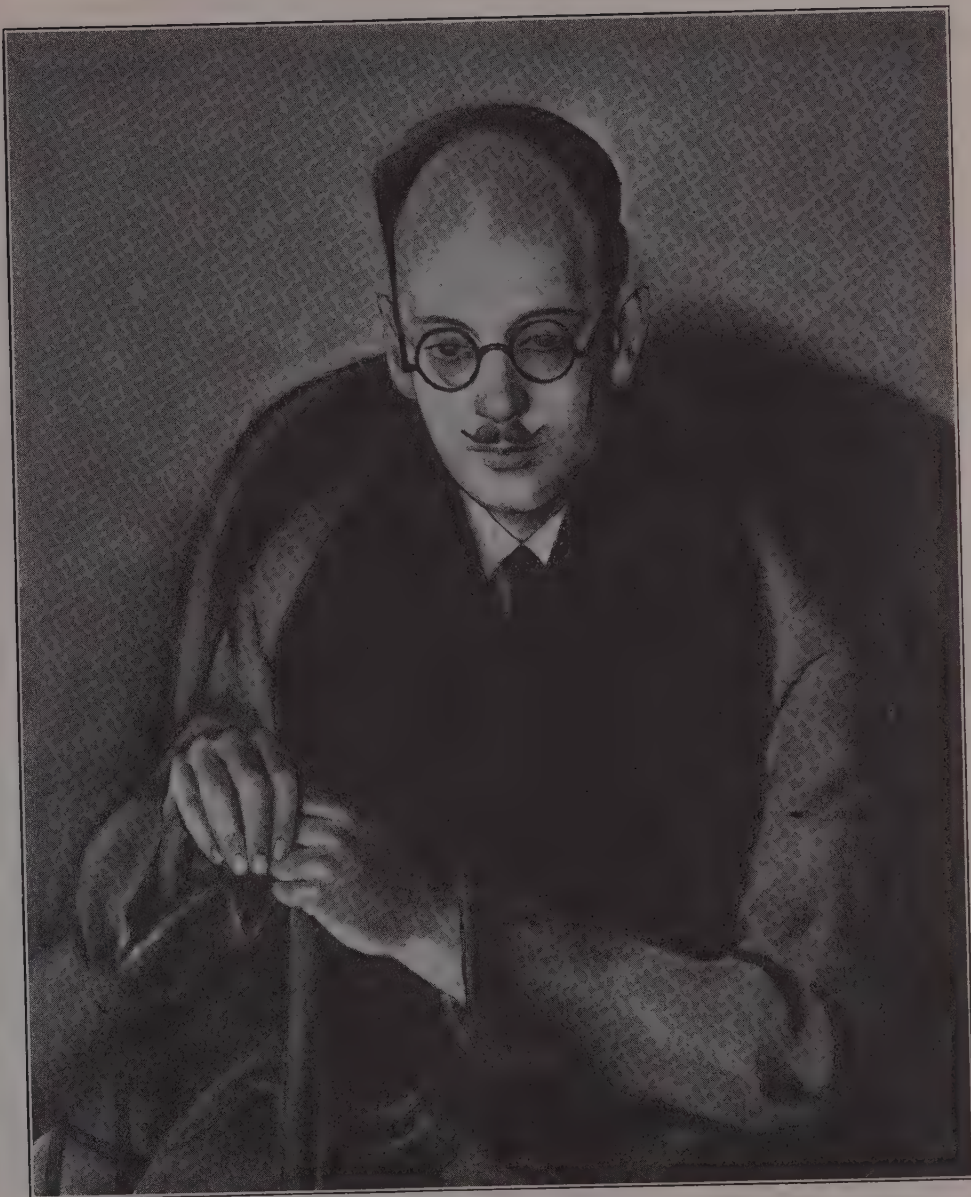
The wind blew cool and the negress stripped and waited: the wind blew cool on her hot body, shriveled her hot body, froze her body in new strength, strange hardness. She laughed. She waited. She stepped softly to the dark mirror. The room was black as her body. The mirror was black as her body: it said nothing. For once it said nothing. She looked long: the mirror was speechless.

She laughed and held her hands away from her body. She had no body. She had no belly. She laughed. Frozen, she let her new thin fingers do soft steps in the air and swing her round softly, softly.

THE COLD AIR

BY IVOR WINTERS

Frigidity the hesitant
uncurls its tentacles
into a furry sun.
The ice expands
into an insecurity
that should appal
yet I remain, a son
of stone and of a
commentary, I, an epitaph,
astray in this
oblivion, this
inert labyrinth
of sentences that
dare not end. It
is high noon and
all is the more quiet
where I trace
the courses of the Crab
and Scorpion, the Bull,
the Hunter, and the Bear—
with front of steel
they cut an aperture
so clear across the
cold that it cannot
be seen: there is no
smoky breath, no
breath at all.



PORTRAIT OF GORHAM B. MUNSON

BY ERNEST FIENE



PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH DELZA

BY ERNEST FIENE

COMPETITIVE AND SOCIAL VALUE

BY L. T. HOBHOUSE

I HAVE been asked to set down here the gist of some remarks made at a recent meeting of the Sociology Club on the occasion of an interesting address by Mr. H. D. Henderson on the "Implications of the Cambridge School of Economists."

It is not altogether an easy task. Mr. Henderson's views are not before the reader and if I were to state and criticize them from memory, or even if I were to appear to be so doing, I might do him an injustice. My acquaintance with the able group of writers in question is very partial and may be vitiated by misapprehensions. But, as the points which I raised were held by some very competent auditors to be germane, it may be hoped that to present the substance of them here may give the opportunity for removing any misapprehensions that there may be, and so help to clear the issue which seems to have been revived between the abstract and concrete methods in the study of Economics. That issue is of the first importance, vitally affecting the whole method of studying economic phenomena and whatever hope we may have of effecting economic improvement.

The central conception in modern economic theory is, as I understand, what is called the Marginal Principle. If we suppose a system of exchanges in which everyone concerned is guided by an intelligent appreciation of his own material interests, seeking to gain as much as he can by giving as little as he can, then in such a system the price of any article or service tends to a point at which the supply of it will be equal to the effective demand. For if the price is above this point it tends in general to call forth an additional supply or to restrict the demand. Either of these effects and *a fortiori* both combined go to reduce the discrepancy. If, on the other hand, the price falls below the equilibrium point, the reverse movements are set going and equilibrium is approached from the other side. Consider one of these movements, say, the increase of supply due to a favorable price. This will proceed with an energy proportional to the excess of the obtainable price over cost. But if the increase of supply increases cost or lowers prices this energy will diminish, until a "margin" is reached beyond which (other

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things remaining constant) all inducement to increase the supply vanishes. *Mutatis mutandis*, corresponding conceptions apply to changes of demand. What pertains to this "margin" and its immediate neighborhood is called "marginal." An increment of supply where the margin is approached — ideally, the last profitable increment — is a marginal increment. The marginal increment of supply less the cost of effecting it is the marginal net product. In terms of money this is the marginal net revenue produced by the additional expenditure. The price per unit of the commodity which just suffices to yield such net revenue is the marginal price, and the other goods and services which this price commands the marginal value.

This conception of the margin, introduced originally to explain the rent of land, and taking visible shape in the outer fence of the last intake from the moorland, is now applied to every factor in production — whether it be the use of land, buildings, machinery, human brain or muscle. Each factor has its value determined by its marginal net product. It either is or is not worth while to introduce a new machine or an additional "hand." If the increased output just exceeds the increased cost — managerial trouble being reckoned as cost — it is just worth while. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same considerations apply to the shutting down of a process, the abandonment of a mine, or of a particular seam, or the discharge of an operative. But we are not to suppose that marginal value affects only those persons or things that we thus picture as flitting to and fro on the threshold of industry. Every grade of skill, for example, up to the highest has its own marginal value, and the marginal value is what each man *of that grade* will get if and in so far as his remuneration is determined by a free bargain. Thus we all sit, somewhat uncomfortably, upon our margins unless we are protected by monopoly or custom, or long contracts. Causes such as these obstruct the tendency of marginal values to establish themselves in actual prices. Moreover, every sort of economic disturbance — any new process, any shift of demand — is always moving the equilibrium point itself. Marginal values, we may take it, are meant to be values which would actually be reached if (1) competition were perfectly free, and (2) economic conditions were stable over a long period, but which at a given moment express not realized results but operative tendencies.

It follows from this conception that so far as competitive self-

interest is working without obstruction every factor in production alike obtains in the course of exchange its marginal net value. If and so far as any factor obtains either more or less than this it is due to something that obstructs or deranges or defers the free operation of competition. Anything of the nature of exploitation it appears must be due to some such derangement. Thus of wages Professor Pigou writes:

"Now, when things have settled down in more or less stable conditions, the play of economic forces tends to secure that in industries in general wages do correspond to the value of the marginal net product of labor."

Thus under really free competition no worker, professional or manual, can complain of exploitation if that means giving more value than he gets. There is one comprehensive and consistent principle regulating all exchanges, viz., the marginal net value of the goods or services produced. Moreover, the operation of this principle produces the maximum national dividend, for if any factor is being paid more than this value it follows that better value will be obtained by substituting something else, and if the factor is being paid less than its value it will pay to increase it. Thus given freedom of mobility, a transference of industrial energies will take place, till the fullest value with the least waste in the circumstances of the case is obtained from each factor. The result of this transference is then to secure a larger total of general satisfaction. Thus the principle is not only comprehensive and consistent but socially advantageous. That is to say it is just. It gives to all fair value, fairness being that which works out to the maximum benefit of all concerned.

It would seem to follow that whatever economic evils there may be arise not from the excess but from the defect of free competition, and that whatever we may seek to do by way of remedy must lie — some exceptional cases apart — not in an endeavor to control the industrial system in the general interest, but in the removal of obstructions to the free disposal of our faculties and our belongings. And though there may be cases of "exploitation" or "profiteering" which we should combat, the ideal distribution at which we should aim is that to which competition, so far as it is freely operative, is always tending. This is — to revert to an old terminology — the natural system and any departure from it is dangerous and in principle unsound. True economic "laws" are universal. Strictly speak-

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ing we cannot disobey them any more than we can disobey the law of gravity. But we can disregard them and with no less disastrous results.

If it were indeed the truth that the most selfish desires of each of us would, if only left unfettered, work out to the good of all, it would be a miracle of pre-established harmony which we could but stand and admire as we admire the ordered procession of the heavenly bodies. But unfortunately it is a miracle which the Disposer of all things has not performed. Even for the individual the repeated satisfaction of passing desire is not the way of enduring happiness. Still less do the aggregate satisfactions of a number of selfish individuals add up to a sum which is the happiness of the whole. Stated in terms of satisfaction, the national dividend is a polite but unscientific fiction. There is no sum of satisfaction which is equitably apportioned among all members of the community as shareholders. From competing selfishness there arises a complex mass of personal and partial satisfactions, many of which are also dissatisfactions to somebody else, and, what is more, deductions from or lesions of the true conditions of general well-being. This is, of course, fully recognized in certain cases: e.g., an ill-managed public-house is a source of temporary satisfaction to tipplers and of profit to the publican, but would be universally recognized as a source of net loss to general well-being. But we must go much farther than that. No small proportion of honorable and, on balance, useful expenditure involves us in countervailing expenditure. Railways and motors take us far afield to reach solitude, beauty and repose — and they cease to be solitude, beauty and repose.*) The whole development of urban traffic and suburban life is a struggle for a combination of advantages which is always defeating itself by its success. The greater the traffic facilities, the denser the crowds that take advantage of them and — what is still more odd — the less apparently do they pay. People are forced to go further in order not to fare worse. There is probably net gain in the development as a whole; but only net gain. For fiscal purposes we add together the revenues of the traffic services and the rents of suburban houses, but the total does not represent a sum of satisfactions, but rather a tangle of conveniences and inconveniences, annoy-

*) The development of the private motor in the United States, as it approximates to the ideal of one household at least one car, is described by observers as tending to defeat itself by the jam on the roads which it entails.

ances and adjustments through which people have found their way to some *modus vivendi* with their circumstances. The kind of life which results from every man seeking his own as best he can in the maze, is not at all to be identified with the kind of life which would be chosen by men envisaging society as a whole and co-operating intelligently in the pursuit of its well-being.

Here the reply may be that, since such co-operation asks too much both of our morals and of our intelligence, the only resource is to fall back on personal freedom of choice. This is lower but not yet safe ground. The supposed freedom is largely illusory. Men may be freed from legal restraints, but they are never free of the social system. At any given moment the choices we make are narrowly limited by the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We are set in the framework of our society. It is not an absolutely rigid framework. It allows a little mobility to some and more to others. But when within the limits allowed we make our choice, make a contract or enter on an occupation, for example, we have to give up something of the little freedom that we enjoyed and are circumscribed by our own acts. The pressure is greater and more insistent upon us in proportion to our necessities. If we are well to do in the world we can at least afford long views. If not, we must in practice bow to necessity as it comes. We have to accept what we should unhesitatingly reject if we could ever afford to wait for a better chance, and each time we so accept we make it more difficult for ourselves ever to reach a position in which our opportunities would be enlarged. What we do now — cannot help doing — will be used against us afterwards. Failure breeds failure as success causes success.

When people talk of freedom they are too apt to wipe out mentally the institutions and entire fabric of society. They think for the moment as though men were starting afresh with no handicap but the differences of their innate faculties, no inherited wealth or position, no differential advantages of education, no aggregations of capital, no going concern of industry and commerce into which each must somehow fit his economic life. Freedom under such conditions would at least be equal, but it would not be long before its operation would build up the frame anew and each man would find himself enmeshed in the system determined by his own acts and those of his neighbors. But to suggest a particular sort of freedom — freedom of individuals from collective regulations — as the re-

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generator of an old society compact of deep-rooted traditions, great hereditary estates, huge industrial concerns, established professional customs, and permeated by extreme economic inequalities, is to betray entire lack of understanding of that which freedom in the concrete means. In particular some who speak of freedom do not seem to consider sufficiently that, as a social principle, freedom, like any other element of a common good, must be something in which all can participate alike. The freedom of A to use his power over B is the reverse of freedom for B, and when it is limited by law or any kind of collective regulation social freedom is not impaired. In general, great inequality of position impairs freedom for the weaker party in a bargain, and whatever redresses such inequality or obviates its effect, makes for a more social freedom, that is the kind or degree of freedom in which all can participate alike.

Just as the actual framework of society limits freedom, so it underlies value in exchange. The market, wherein the price of an article is said to be determined by its marginal value, is a social creation with limits narrowed or expanded by social conditions, and within it the marginal value itself is determined by the number of people wanting the article on the one hand and the resources available for its supply on the other. No doubt, so far as competition is effective, things of one kind tend to one and the same price and this a price which for the time being balances demand and supply. But this price in turn is not cause but effect of an array of social and material factors. The course of production is shaped, to begin with, by the desires of those who can pay, the lightest desire of those who have the means being more effectual than the most urgent need of those who have not the means.*) There is, therefore, nothing sacrosanct about the relative prices of things or services which happen to rule in any given society at a given time. They are conditioned by the character of the society, by its degree of enlightenment, by the evenness or unevenness in the distribution of wealth, as well as by the material resources of the community. Now the relative price of material things does not concern us for the moment except so far as it affects the payment of services, but the payment of services does concern us, for it is by this that the fairness or unfairness of our economic system is to be judged. When some economists define fair wages for any service as those which would generally be ob-

*) Thus, at a time when many could not get a house at all, one has seen great houses adding wings or garages.

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tainable for a service of that kind, they appear to assume that there is no standard at all except the actual forces that operate in a given society at a given time. They would admit apparently that a man, who coerces or cajoles another into accepting something less than the generally recognized rate, is acting improperly. Yet it is by the entire system of such pressures i.e., by close and hard bargaining, that competitive rates get fixed, and the man who is exercising a little more pressure than the normal may be just the forward and enterprising spirit who is initiating a new downward movement of wages and prices. If it is fair that remuneration should be fixed in this way, why blame the pioneers? The truth is that at its best higgling is an ugly proceeding, and the most successful higgler neither an object of beauty nor of social utility, though often a notably successful carver out of fortunes.

What is more to our purpose, however, is that those who define fairness by reference to general practice have no answer to make to anyone who arraigns that practice as itself unfair. That is to say, they have none if they stick to their definition. They can only deny that there is or can be any standard beyond that which a given society at a given time happens to recognize, but it would be very difficult to qualify such a standard as necessarily fair if it may vary and if in some cases it fails to make adequate provision for human needs. Our economic analysis, therefore, has another equation in reserve. The remuneration generally obtainable for any service is the equivalent of the marginal net product of that service. What could be fairer? Actual equality of value — a relation independent of all variations of opinion, custom, social structure, mathematically measurable, and, since it maintains the balance of supply and demand, socially desirable. Without some such conception behind it the notion of fairness could never be whole-heartedly identified with mere generality of observance. What then are we to think of this equation? Is it (*a*) true that in industries in general wages do tend to correspond to the marginal net product of labor, and (*b*) is this, if true, a sufficient proof that they are in any and every case "fair"?

On the first point I suppose the "marginalist" would argue somewhat after this fashion. Assume a class of workers as helpless economically as you choose to make them — untrained unskilled women, say. Allow that an employer begins by paying them less than their marginal net value. Then he will make abnormal pro-

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fits, which will either attract the attention of other employers, and cause them to bid for the same class of labor, or will enable him to expand his business and thus increase his own demand. It will follow that the economic position of the workers will improve and wages will rise until the marginal point is reached. But though this is one possibility, I think it is only one of several. Another possibility, perhaps more likely to be realized, particularly in villages and slow moving country districts, is that the women will exhibit little or no resilience to an advantageous situation. They will take what they have been accustomed to and ask no more. They may profit a little by continuity of employment, but will expect no higher rate. The employer, whom I assume to be acting in the terms of the argument as a sheer economic man, may then expand his business to the limit of his resources and of his business capacity and in that way reach his margin. This, however, is a margin not determined by the productivity of the women's labor, but entirely by the employer's convenience, and he continues to reap a surplus until it is convenient to him to retire from the scene.

At the same time another process may be, probably is, going on. Through continued underpayment and constant employment in low grade occupations the women themselves have become worth rather less. Alternatives are gradually closed to them, their elasticity of adaptation is diminished. They are perhaps half-dependent on charity and the poor law, and the children growing up to replace them start life a little lower in the scale than their mothers. Now it becomes doubtful whether they could after all obtain more if they stood for it. The marginal value is approached by the reduction of their efficiency.

Yet another alternative is possible. Rival employers who were paying better wages find themselves undersold, and are forced to cut wages to keep their trade. All alike come to the margin, society in general benefiting in some degree by the reduction in price at the expense of the worker. The pioneer employer—the more complete and perfect economic man — has found out that labor could be got more cheaply than was supposed and so has forced an all-round lowering of the margin both of prices and wages. The women may get the equivalent of their net product; but this product as measured in money has been fixed by the action of the employer who began the under-cutting.

Again, there is the possibility that the employers paying better

wages might meet competition by improvements, more machinery, better organization, and reliance on the more willing service resting on "fair" conditions. Once more there will be a tendency to equilibrium; but on quite different lines moving to a different point, and once more the point depends as much on the action of the employers as on that of the workpeople.

Which of these various lines will, in fact, be followed depends a good deal on bargaining power. When many things are pressing hard on one another the most squeezable (does it need saying?) will be the most squeezed. As each man seeks to expand his trade he finds himself forced to cut prices, and to do so he must cut costs, and the easiest way of cutting costs is to take it out of those who at the moment can offer least resistance. Eventually he comes to a point beyond which he cannot go, and this is the margin. In terms of the prices which have thus come about, the lowest grade of workers are very possibly receiving the equivalent of their marginal net products. But who fixed the margin? If they were not squeezable, if they were combined, if there were a statutory wage, the margin would be cut at a different point. What would be the effect on prices, on the volume of the product, on the employment of different classes of workers, it is not possible to say *a priori*. But the conditions to which the industry would have to adapt itself would be different. There would be methods by which it could no longer be carried on with profit. There might be places in which it could not be carried on with profit. There might be employers by whom it could no longer be carried on with profit. But it does not necessarily follow that the total output would be less. There would be a transference from one place to another, one method to another, one type of employer to another, and in this transference all relative values would be affected.

I am not for the moment considering the merits of the methods of limiting competition. I am concerned only to illustrate ways in which the bargaining position of workers may affect the whole system of values. For this gravely affects the import of any answer that we may give to our question, Do wages tend to coincide with the marginal net product of labor? From what has been said it would appear (1) that it is not necessary that they should, and (2) that, if they do, we have still to ask what fixes the margin. For (a) if equivalence between wages and productivity is established, this is as likely to be effected by the modification of productivity in

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terms of money as by modification of wages; (b) such modification is more likely to be due to the action of employers or of forces which neither employers nor workers control than to any response on the part of the workers; (c) as such circumstances vary, so will the point of equilibrium shift. There is an indefinite number of possibilities and the worker, unless highly alert and organized, has probably less say in deciding between them than other parties to the transaction.

This brings us to our second question, whether equivalence of payment to net productivity is necessarily fair. There seem to be two possible standards by which we can decide whether a man is treated fairly. One regards his needs as a human being, the other, what we call his deserts, a complex and difficult conception of which, however, we can say this much with certainty, that it turns on what he is or does or even might do. Now marginal equivalence does not necessarily satisfy either of these conditions. It may give the worker less than his human needs. It may not suffice to keep him in the bare necessities of permanent health, to say nothing of the conditions of growth and expansion of faculty. He may be unable to live on his wages without resorting to charity or the poor law. There is nothing in the principle of the margin to prevent this, and it occurs. Nor does it necessarily give him his deserts regarded as something personal to him, some function of his personal qualifications or performances. For, as we have seen, his personal performance is only one of several independent variables determining his wages. The others are not under his control. The actual quantity of a given product which he turns out at a given time may be constant, while the payment that he gets for it may vary materially from causes which he cannot command. This is the root of his desire, as soon as he becomes alert and organized, to have some hand, direct or indirect, in the determination of selling prices and thereby of the course of trade. He may be insufficiently equipped for the purpose and, like other people, when he has obtained power he may abuse it, but in the endeavor to make his remuneration an effective factor in the determination of prices instead of the mere sport of the market he is only refusing to be the plaything of circumstance.

Admittedly the employer cannot systematically pay the worker more than the value of his product, or the employer himself would eventually be brought to the ground. But the obtainable value is relative to the system in which the producer is working. It may be

one thing in a system of unregulated competition and quite another in a system regulated with a view to securing the real and permanent needs of all members of the community. To give two illustrations. Such a system would have no use for the employer whose speciality is driving and hard bargaining. It would rule him out by the insistence on standards. His marginal value to it would be nil, and the field would be left for employers who desire their workers to share in their success and are interested in making the best of them. Nor, again, would it countenance the use of a worker under conditions which, however convenient for the moment, would tend to his permanent deterioration. It may be perfectly true that an elderly operative, who was never trained and never had a respite from the urgency of need to make a fresh start, would not now under any system produce the equivalent of a reasonable maintenance. But a community organized with a view to making the best of its members would not allow the operative to fall into this condition if it could be avoided. At any rate, his productivity as it now stands is something quite different from the productivity of one similarly endowed whose lot has been cast on other lines. What is in a manner "fair" now to the stunted cramped faculty would be a great deal less than fair to that faculty as nature framed it. So here we have a glimpse of what fairness really means. It is, at any rate, the sufficient stimulus and maintenance of industrial faculty. But not of any faculty. Not of the various ways of amassing wealth at the expense of others. These have their reward as things are; but it would be "fairer" that they should have none. Their marginal net productivity to society is negative. Whereas all that can add to the social well-being is of positive value and requires that reward which sustains it at the maximum of efficiency. Marginal productivity would be a good enough test in a system deliberately shaped to meet the real needs of human beings, in the order of their urgency.

In general, the value of a commodity or a service is relative to the system of exchanges within which it is produced or performed. In what we call a competitive system it will be one thing. In a system governed by the permanent needs of general well-being it will be another thing. There would be different scales of prices and costs. In each system prices must be adjusted to one another, if the system is to go on working; but the basis of the adjustment would differ. So far as the common well-being dominates the economic order, the urgency and generality of human needs become the prin-

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cipal factor in effective demand and govern the direction of productive energies. The drain on vitality, the quantity and quality of human energy put into work, become the main determinants in its cost. The opportunities of obtaining or holding wealth without social service are diminished. Such changes shift the economic equilibrium, and the resulting system of values, no less necessarily adjusted to one another than those of a competitive system, may with more reason be deemed fair to all parties since it is their common well-being on which it rests.

"Such an ideal," it may be rejoined, "is well enough. Unfortunately it is in conflict with economic laws which no changes of institution and no effort of human will can alter. Economics is a science like any other and the laws which it discovers are universal and unconditional. We can only bow to them, we cannot alter them or avert their consequences." How far, we must ask, is this true? Are economic laws independent of the institutions and even of the character of men, or are they statements of consequences which flow from institutions or from character? There appear, in fact, to be different possibilities. If a law correctly states some relation of physical facts, it is obviously independent of human motive and, therefore, whatever our motives may be, cannot be ignored without unfortunate consequences. The law of diminishing returns to land was held to be a law of such a kind, but its history shows how careful we have to be in making any such assumption, for it soon became clear that the law would not hold good unless due allowance were made for changes in the industrial arts and other circumstances dependent on the human factor. But we need not doubt that there are physical laws which are relevant in the economic sphere, and these, of course, no change of human motives could affect. But with regard to the main laws of demand and supply it is otherwise. These base themselves directly on generalizations about human motives. They assume that in production and exchange men are constantly trying to get as much as they can and give as little as they can. Suppose for a moment — it may be a great strain on the imagination, so I ask it only for a moment — that it were not so. Suppose that human nature actually worked on the Christian principles which also claim a universal authority. Imagine then the economic scene. We should have the coal owners addressing the miners on the inadequacy of their pay. "Do consider," they would say, "the arduous and dangerous nature of your toil, the risks you

encounter, the toll of life taken by defective roofs and escaping gas which all our precautions cannot prevent, the dismal and unhealthy character of life underground, the necessity of providing for premature old age. You really must agree to shorter hours and higher wages." And the miners would reply, "You are very good and there is some truth in what you say; but we do not quite see how it is to be done. Your returns are already cut to a fine point and you are hardly recompensed for your heavy responsibilities and anxieties. We are afraid that any increase in our wages must affect the price of coal and bear hardly on workers who are already poorer than ourselves. The risks we run have their compensations, and we are pleased with our sons when they follow us into our job, because we think it makes men of them. So it is for you to put your brains into the elaboration of cheaper methods of extracting coal and when you have done that you can come and talk to us about raising wages." A grotesque phantasy all this, you may say. Possibly. I am only pointing out that, if this were, in fact, the way in which human nature worked, the main laws of economics would be entirely different. But I go on to add that, even if there is only a little bit of this element in human nature, the laws of economics are just to that extent different from those which have been assumed. As a matter of fact, the economic man is just as much an ideal in the scientific sense as the pure Christian is an ideal in the moral sense, and the one is no more completely realized than the other. If the miners do not show that idealized regard for the general consumer which I have feigned, is it not true that they show some regard for one another? The suggested "pooling" arrangement, for example, may be unsound; but it does clearly imply some considerable sacrifice on the part of the richer coalfields on behalf of the poorer ones, and it could scarcely be put forward if the Yorkshire miners were pure economic men bent on getting the last penny of advantage out of the virtues of Yorkshire coal. The entire Trade Union movement is founded on loyalty — a partial loyalty, the loyalty to one's mate, which too easily becomes a combination against the rest of the world — but still a loyalty and not a purely selfish ambition for personal ends. What has to be done with such loyalties is not to destroy them but seek to educate and widen them. The bottom necessity, as Mill said long ago, is that men should learn to dig and weave for their country as they have learnt to fight for their country, and the converse truth — without which the worker

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will never learn that lesson — is that their country must learn to do them justice.

I have no very great belief in changes in human nature, if that means the average of the inherited powers and propensities with which men are born into the world. But which of these propensities will operate and to what sort of life they will work out is a very different question. Here the social structure is the prepotent factor and this structure, though founded on these same propensities, does in fact change very materially from place to place and from age to age, as men in their mutual intercourse envisage new lines of behavior, new modes of life, and accomodate themselves thereto, and with any such change the economic system may be modified and the balance of economic forces may be shifted. In particular, as men trust to their social propensities and come to view life as a whole, motives deeply rooted in humanity, though overlaid by more selfish cares or obscured by narrowness of imagination, come to their own and are recognized as the setting within which the life of the individual himself is seen at its best. Every step in this direction modifies the balance of economic forces, however slightly, tending to make the real and permanent needs of the community preponderate over the self-centred desires of individuals. Careful statements of the uniform results of given conditions are not altered; but conditions are altered and their equally uniform and scientifically assignable results come about in due course. One need not believe in a single centralized system of production and distribution. That has its enormous well-known difficulties. Some play of free initiative is needed, not for personal ambition, but for the general good. But we may, without straining our optimism, believe that there is enough available wisdom to note the essential needs that are unfulfilled and to discover means of amendment. We shall have our failures and we must recognize from the outset that social improvement, like all human advance, goes through trial and error. In making our experiment we should be foolish to ignore economic analysis, but we should be extremely careful about the conditions of any law which it propounds. That twice two is four is a generalization which changes of human motive will not affect. But that the product of four hours' work is twice the product of two hours' is an inference on which the physiologist and psychologist have a good deal to say, and its truth may be materially affected by motive in the form of sustainment of interest. One can see that our old

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friend the marginal principle itself would have an application even under the most rigid socialist system, for the organizers of such a system would have to measure costs against products and one kind of product against another, and in so doing they would come to margins. Only their standard of measurement, their valuation of goods and costs, would be different and their margins would be cut along different lines from those of a competitive economy. Thus there may be laws which, carefully stated, are universal and yet under changed conditions would work out very differently, and there may be laws which merely state the consequences of conditions which are themselves variable. The theories arrived at by the analysis of existing conditions are very liable to confuse the two and to assume a rigidity of form against which we must be on our guard. Here the study of the concrete is our resource. We must look to history and the comparative method to see how things change, and to contemporary history, descriptive economies, the statistical measurement of change, the imaginative realization of life as it is for our neighbors, to check abstraction and to guide experiment. We need a rational ethics to give comprehensiveness and consistency to our aims and a scientific psychology to test the solidity of their grounding in human nature. These are large demands easier to state than to fulfill. They serve their purpose if they indicate that economic analysis is a part in a much larger whole. It is an important part; but here, as in other cases, the better teachers have been those who have not restricted their vision to the field of their special effort; but have realized that there is something wider which it is theirs rather to serve than to command.

DOG

BY JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Cock-a-doodle-doo the brass-lined rooster says,
Brekekekex intones the fat Greek frog,—
These fantasies do not terrify me as
The bow-wow-wow of dog.

I had a little doggie who used to sit and beg,
A pretty little creature with tears in his eyes
And anomalous hand extended on a leg,—
Housebroken was my Huendchen, and so wise.

Booms the voice of a big dog like a bell.
But Fido sits at dusk on Madam's lap
And bored beyond his tongue's poor skill to tell
Rehearses his pink paradigm, To yap.

However. Up the lane the tender bull
Proceeds unto his kine; he yearns for them,
Whose eyes adore him and are beautiful;
Love speeds him and so treason nor mayhem.

But, on arriving at the gap in the fence,
Behold! again the ubiquitous hairy dog,—
Like a numerous army rattling the battlements
With shout, though it is but his monologue,—
With a lion's courage and a bee's virulence,
Though he is but one dog.

Shrill is the fury of the proud red bull,
His knees quiver, and the honeysuckle vine
Expires with anguish as his voice, terrible,
Cries, "What do you want of my twenty lady kine?"

Ah, nothing doubtless; yet his dog's-fang is keen,
His dog's-heart cannot suffer these marriage rites
Enacted in the dark if they are obscene,
Misogynist, censorious of delights.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Now the air trembles to the sorrowing Moo
Of the twenty blameless ladies of the mead
Fearing their lord's precarious set-to.
It is the sunset and the heavens bleed.

The hooves of the red bull slither the claybank
And cut the green tendrils of the vine; his horn
Slices the young birch unto splinter and shank
But lunging leaves the bitch's boy untorn.

Across the red sky comes master, Hodge by name,
Upright, biped, tall-browed, and self-assured,
In his hand a cudgel, in his cold eye a flame:
"Have I beat my dog so sore and he is not cured?"

His stick and stone and curse rain on the brute
That pipped his bull of gentle pedigree
Till the leonine smarts with pain and disrepute
And the bovine weeps in the bosom of his family.

Old Hodge stays not his hand, but whips to kennel
The renegade. God's peace betide the souls
Of the just! But in the box grown round with fennel
Two red eyes shine with chemistry of coals.

LYING IN GRASS.

MELVILLE CANE

August . . .
In high, dry grass,
Arm crooked
Head cupped,
Ear sunk,
Flank pressed
Into earth.
Eyes are
Two field-mice,
Scurrying, scurrying,
Through grass-tips,
Sniffing shadows,
Nibbling sun-glints,
Darting back
Into sleep holes.



DRAWING

BY ERNEST FIENE

FRANKIE

BY FISWOODE TARLETON

THE street is taking its breath from the wharves; the river is shouldering the wind, dumping the wind into the street's mouth. Row boats moored to the wharves strain at their soggy leashes, struggle to enter the street's mouth. The mouth of the street sucks at the stack of a river tug. Black smoke is inhaled by people who talk from window to window in alien tongues. Children bare their bottoms to doorsteps, scratch, and wipe dust from their eyes. Pale, spitting street lights impose on shadows a restless tossing; shadows are angular forms in black habits trying in vain to rest in alleyways.

A figure emerges from an alley's mouth, splitting the shadow curtains dropped by close brick walls. Against the velvety pitch of the alley she is a white smear which the wind wants to efface. The wind pulls at her shrunken skirt. The wind has many hands; it brings her a new companion. Nearer and nearer it draws him. She takes a rag and mirror from her wrist-bag. Her fingers make quick little dabs at her face. The street light dances in her mirror, the oncoming form sways in her mirror. Her fingers work quickly, tucking in her waist, straightening her belt.

The footsteps draw nearer. An elongated shadow lurches from side to side on the sidewalk. She reads the shadow. Its movement is a betrayal. She steps out on the shadow, walks ahead, on the shadow. Feet scrape behind her. Gusts of wind like firm little fingers drape her form with quick pulls at her skirt. Her contour flaunting, the wind is urged to a final effrontery of showing her thighs. The shadow on which she walks is suddenly effaced by a blot spilled by the walls of a church. A newspaper clatters up to her, flaps against her legs, hugs her legs. She turns and stops the lurch of the oncoming form.

"Chur-rist!"

A face under a sailor's cap pokes into hers. Gin fumes enter her nose, her throat, making her cough.

"Goddam wind blew me inta yuh."

"I know, honey. It's fierce!"

FRANKIE

Her eyes scout over his body, finally hang over the pocket of his blouse, glue themselves to ends of crumpled bills.

He clutches her shoulder roughly. A current of pain travels her body.

"Don't do that, honey!"

He releases his hold and sways.

"Let's take a walk, sweetie." She grabs his arm. They move half a block. Under a street light the sailor halts abruptly and peers into her face. He laughs boisterously.

"C'mon, sweetie." She pulls him by the arm. They move on, he mumbling, incoherent. They step into another shadow. The iron fence surrounding the church dips into the shadow. The sailor's head is down. His hip strikes the fence. He stops and leans, against the fence.

"C'mon, sweetie." She pulls him by the arm again. But his hands clutch the pickets of the fence.

"Goddam, *no*."

A cart rumbling out of the alley drowns her voice. Men leap off the cart like imps in a dream, lift garbage cans to the cart and return them to the sidewalk with a clang. The horse bores into the wind. Stops.

She leans against the sailor, presses her body against him. The hand of the wind holds her there.

"Oh, Jesus!" He laughs.

"What's so funny, sweetie?"

"Lil ole crows, perchin'!"

"I don't know what you mean, sweetie."

Her fingers creep slowly up his breast, scarcely touching his blouse. Her fingers, her thin fingers, close like a crab on the ends of the crumpled bills in his pocket.

"So you won't come along with me, sweetie?"

"Gotta go tuh ship. Goddam ship!"

"Well, ta ta, sweetie."

She backs deep into the shadows and the shadows engulf her. The quivering push of the wind is at her breast. She backs into the alley as fragments of obscenity fly into open windows. Heads pop out of windows. Oaths tear suddenly past her ears and splinter against the walls of the alley. Heavy footsteps vibrate the ground behind her. She leaps ahead, races, on tip-toes. The folds of the shadows close over her. The heavy feet behind her are stumbling,

FISWOODE TARLETON

colliding. She turns abruptly, descends two steps.

Her fingers are feelers that find storm doors ajar. She crouches deep in the black recess behind the doors and doesn't breathe as the footsteps draw near. Oaths pelt her face and stir the shadows that envelop her. The footfalls suddenly cease. The oaths cease, like rain that has drenched the air. The quiet now is a miracle that expands in her mind like a dream. She breathes quietly.

Her clutch loosens on the bills. She feels and counts to herself. One—two—three—four—five. Five bucks at least. Maybe some of the bills are twos. Maybe fives. Nope. Can't be fives. Sailors don't get much. And it costs a lot to get pickled. Hooch costs fierce nowadays. She feels a match rolls up in the bills and drops it into her bag. She drops the bills into her bag. She takes out the bills and drops them in her bosom.

A bell tolls ten. Its notes unravel and are stretched by the wind. Ribbons of sound band the city.

She shifts her position on the hard, cold floor. Funny the pounding feet of the "gob" died so sudden. She takes off a shoe and stocking and changes the bills from her bosom to the sole of her stocking. The "gob" vanished just like the wind lifted him over the house-tops. She looks up at the house-tops.

A pale gas flame struggles for life in a top room of a tenement. Shadows nod behind four men seated at a table. The men wear their hats and squint at their cards. Marcus is there, wearing his hat. Marcus for her tomorrow. Marcus is white. Not like some loan sharks. Marcus'd keep her feather boa for a year. Not like some loan sharks, sell it the minute the ninety days are up.

She wishes she had her feather boa now. The wind on her back is like ice. All the birds that went into her boa. Blackbirds. Crows! "Little ole crows perchin'!" Insultin' damn gob. Insultin' talk. Insultin' eyes. Laughed in her face. The cheap, rotten piker! He must have taken a tumble. The alley must have reached up and handed him a knockout.

She looks out from behind the storm doors. The alley is covered with a pall. She listens. The wind is rummaging in the refuse cans, under the pall. She looks up at the house-tops. A windblown paper is clutching at a cornice, like a bird The dirty piker! She squirms under the shadows. Her thoughts are needles that catch in the folds of the shadows and the shadows prick her with her thoughts.

FRANKIE

Groping in her wrist-bag, her fingers, her thin fingers, close on her mirror. Close on the sailor's match The shadows flee the yellow flare, leaving a sediment in the lines under her eyes. Her eyes harden in the mirror. Her face hardens.

A narrow shadow reaches out from the company of shadows and flicks the tail of her eye. A gin-laden gust snuffs out the match, brushes her nostrils A single scream rides the wind.

OUT OF DREAM

BY WALTER F. KOHN

Into such evenings jewelled cities rise
out of your fantasy like lavish gardens
flowering to a sky whose only star
(a dewdrop on a still and shining plum)
burns coldly and immeasurably far

while your more ardent eyes
behold, in some dark carpeted bazaar,
the ravishment of one who slowly turns
in languid dance,
to a bewilderment of drum

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WOODSTOCK LETTER

Woodstock, N. Y., September, 1925.

I have just come away from a visit to the studio of my friend, Alfeo Faggi, where I had the great pleasure of seeing once again the fifteen stations he has made for the new Catholic church in Chicago and which he will probably exhibit in New York the coming winter. And as I sit down to write this letter I know again the same elation of the spirit, the same reverence for life, the same alarming simplicity of the true creator I have always known coming away from this man and his work.

The stations I mention have of course to do with the myth of Jesus. Alfeo Faggi is an Italian by birth, a child of that particular Italy of Giotto and Donatello and St. Frances and Dante. The same religious fervor informs his art, the same mystic serenity, the same fusion of high intellect and simple emotion, the same primitive vigor, the same reliance on absolute values in life and in art over and above the transitory values of actuality. What has been thought by some to be the ultra-radical quality of his work is in reality a strict hewing to the lines of his native tradition. A tradition which, dispensing with the elaborate and fleshy surfaces of the Renaissance, harks back to the medieval world, to essential harmony, to a moment of balance that was culture.

That hieratic quality, that tremendous frontal attack, that cutting to the bone, to essential form which characterized Faggi's earlier work — I speak of course in terms of chronology only — these values are eminently manifest in the stations. There is in them the same fusion of sensuous reality and abstract concept that is the valid compromise between artist and audience. Under Faggi's chisel the myth of Jesus has taken on once again that sweet, austere, mystical immanence that is the perfect flower of Christianity.

I trust that the readers of *The Guardian* will have the good fortune to see these stations when they are exhibited during the forthcoming season. For I feel that they are an invaluable contribution to the art of sculpture, that we in America are especially in need of such a contribution, that it cannot fail to exert great influence on our artists to come.

Two of Faggi's creations, previously exhibited in New York, were to be seen in the season's first exhibition at the Woodstock gallery, which has just been terminated to make way for a Crafts show: his Eve, that perfect morning of the world with the cool and freshness of early gardens still upon it; and Tagore, luminous, peaceful, harmonious, pure with inner strength.

This opening exhibition, I am sorry to say, was not entirely satisfactory. (But then, what exhibition ever is?) Some of the paintings exhibited were decidedly above the ordinary; the majority showed evidence of sound workmanship, an intelligent and sensitive preoccupation with means. But there

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was about the show an aroma of grossness, of aggressiveness, an entirely too free display of paint for paint's sake, as if a man were to make a great deal of noise in order to cover up the obvious fact that he had nothing at all to say.

Three portraits stood out distinctly from the walls. These were the *Portrait of the Man in the Silk Hat*, by Henry McFee, *Self-Portrait*, by Charles Bateman, and a *Portrait of Rivard* by Judson Smith. McFee's portrait is a sound piece of composition, masterfully organized. It is authentic painting and you do not have to look at it twice to know that here is solid work. And yet it is entirely lacking in any thought other than that of the particular technical problems presented. The end is merely a demonstration of how well the artist knows how to handle his means. It is just a little lurid, just a little theatrical with the inessential red lip hurtling out of the shadow. It is only a portrait of Mr. McFee wearing a silk hat.

Bateman's portrait is aloof, almost glacial in conception. It is organized out of the simplest elements in line and color. Bateman is cautious. If he is not sure he knows how to use three colors he will use two, if he can use these two to his satisfaction. Bateman, I suppose, might be called a "metaphysical" painter in the false sense of the word as applied to a certain school of English poets who were intellectual romanticists. His warmth is intellectual, his art reveals his art.

It is an art perhaps too entirely of overtones and one might well demand of it more of the authentic juices of life. Admitting at the same time the coolness and luminosity of color and simplicity of design of his *Landscape*, which has the aspect of a vision.

Judson Smith's portrait was previously exhibited at the Independents. It is warm, pulsating work, very sensitive and very rich in emotion. Speaking of Judson Smith, by the way, I should like to recall his *Winter Barnes* which I had the pleasure of reproducing last summer in 1924 and which I believe to be genuine fruit of a latent American tradition.

The editors of *The Guardian* inform me they are exhibiting two of Ernest Fiene's portraits and two of his line drawings in the same issue with this letter. I have seen these portraits and I feel they are very unusual. I have also had the opportunity of seeing Fiene's watercolors which appeal to me immensely and which seem to me to place their creator in the first rank of American watercolorists.

Fiene is a rare phenomenon in these days of constipated art. He produces with the fecundity and the perfect naturalness with which an apple tree brings forth apples or a lilac bush its sprigs of flower. The age has not stunted him nor has its intricate and tangled pattern forced him to accept the barren conceits of formalism. His is the sanity of health rooted in the soil, the true concept of form as spirit, as essence, as that which "informs" one's being and therefore one's work. All of Fiene's work is suffused with a lusty earthiness, the warmth and the luminosity of life. He is a natural singer in color and in line.

EDWIN SEAVER

(Note: Mr. Fiene's second line drawing will appear in the next issue of *THE GUARDIAN*).

ARKANSAS LETTER

Monticello, September 1925.

"Why do people laugh when a man says he hails from Arkansas? It is something we have never understood. Persons we have known from Arkansas were no more comical than Alabamans, Californians, or New Englanders . . ." This is comforting, coming as it does from the literary editor of the Nashville Tennessean, and is gratifying to the writer personally since it was written soon after he had visited with the Fugitive Group at Nashville. Arkansas has so long been the scapegoat of states that a sense of delicacy should restrain me from writing of its accomplishments in derogatory terms, and yet, how can one speak of a cultural development when there is none. Unless one might assign a cultural significance to a growing tendency among its men to observe rules of tonsorial nicety and among its women to discard the loose-flowing and voluminous "wrapper." Arkansas' rotarians will say with a flourish that the day of the Arkansas Traveler is forever past, that Arkansas now has under construction one of the best-ordered highway systems of any southern state, that Arkansas is entering upon a remarkable industrial awakening, and all of that is true I think, but since it is not the purport of this letter to introduce Arkansas from an economic standpoint, it is hardly justifiable that I should join the rotarians here in paeaning the industrial development of the state.

As a matter of fact, Arkansas is just now undergoing that standardization which has already sapped nine-tenths of America of whatever she may have possessed of the individual. Arkansas is fast becoming a mecca for those pompous hordes of rotarians, lions, shriners, ku-klux, literary ladies, and what-nots. With all the vanity of strutting peacocks thousands of shriners descend upon Little Rock where they have builded them a magnificent million dollar temple, to parade down its cluttered streets, bands shrieking, banners waving, while gaping throngs cheer themselves hoarse and turn away with exclamations of pride. How America worships the brobdingnagian display, the brummagem splendor! The fiery cross is raised on the outskirts of every hamlet and city and under its brilliant glow gather the self-appointed saviors of our nation, to indulge in elaborate and mystical ceremonies to the accompaniment of clicking cameras. So it is in Arkansas . . . so it is in America.

The Authors' and Composers' Society with a considerable membership has its monthly meetings and its great annual get-together; on such occasions Mrs. Sally Biddle may read with sweet tremulo her little poems that just come to her somehow so spontaneous, and Miss Annie Argonaut, the child-wonder, will play a few of her own compositions so marvelous, usually patriotic and O, very tuneful! All renditions will be received enthusiastically and with that literary patronage so perfectly bestowed by the ladies of our literary societies. Almost every town, hamlet and community center has its Sorosis Club, its literary society, its pen-women and its book-fellows. Here

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literature is spelled with a capital L and is pronounced *litriture*. Here sweet moisty-eyed ladies with an esthetic pallor give readings from Eddie Guest (whom almost everyone agrees is the greatest living poet) or review with fulsome praise the latest chef-d'oeuvre of say Harold Bell Wright or Mrs. Porter. A popular referendum on the ten foremost present-day authors would probably result in placing Harold Bell Wright at the head of the list, Gene Stratton Porter next, with Grace Richmond, Kathleen Norris, Bernie Babcock, the authoress of *Pollyanna*, Zane Grey, James Oliver Curwood, etc., rubbing elbows for succeeding places. Arkansans are still strong for the "sweet wholesome stuff" and our "literary leaders" are unanimous in decrying the degradating frankness of our modern fiction. We have our censorship boards for movies, popular sentiment would also censor literature; more uplift is pregnant in the atmosphere.

From the rotarian viewpoint, Arkansas is the Wonder State, and I must confess that sometimes when I contemplate the natural riches and beauties of Arkansas, I am almost persuaded to become a rotarian. But alack, in the literary scene, Arkansas is a fade-out — that is, almost, for we have Charles J. Finger and his *All's Well*. When one is questioned concerning Arkansas' part in the artistic development of the last decade, one is thrown into a pale blue funk, when gradually out of the nebulous vacuity is resolved the name of Charles J. Finger, and one is saved! For although Charles J. Finger is not of Arkansas, he is in Arkansas, and from Arkansas issues *All's Well*, unique among American journals, and in Arkansas has produced his best works. Thus the "Squire of the Ozarks," as someone has dubbed him, saves us from complete obliteration from the literary map. And any state might well boast the acquisition of a Finger. He is perhaps the finest raconteur we have in American letters, past or present. William Marion Reedy hailed him as a new Stevenson, an American Conrad. R. B. Cunningham Graham, W. H. Hudson, J. C. Squire, and other distinguished writers and critics have given him a very high rating. He is the he-author among authors. Physically he is stocky, thick, neck like a bull's, hair on his chest; there is virility, aggressiveness, independence and beauty in all that he writes. Adventure, daring, chivalry, valor, — these qualities become articulate in the things he writes. From Fayetteville he issues forth now and then the pamphlet-like *All's Well*, and in this he discourses most agreeably on life and letters. If he is sometimes cock-sure, egotistical, garrulous, and arbitrary, we mind it not at all. However, Arkansas knows neither Finger nor *All's Well*. While the glossy-back magazines find their way into the best homes and the *True Confessions Magazine* has a generous circulation, homely little *All's Well* must go a-begging, and the *Squire of the Ozarks* must remain unknown among the people of the state that he has chosen for his residence and his rendezvous, except for a few splendid minds that are to be found among faculty members at the State University.

After Finger, we hasten to mention John Gould Fletcher, born in Little Rock, but Fletcher has long resided in England and Arkansas knows him not. Of course the time will come when her historians will be proud to name

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him a native poet, but that will be after Fletcher is gone and others have accorded him a high niche among modern poets. John W. Crawford, also, is a native of this state, but here he is scarcely known at all. Then there is Thyra Sampter Winslow, writer of gay witty sophisticated stories not very significant, but at least neither banal nor tepid. So much for Arkansas' just claims to literary distinction. She has no painters, no sculptors, no composers, no little Theatres; if she has produced other artists than those I have mentioned, I do not know them.

To be sure the presidents of our literary societies would mention the names of Bernie Babcock of *The Soul* of Ann Rutledge fame, C. T. Davis, the Arkansas Gazette poet, to say nothing of numerous, O yes, very numerous, poetesses from various pen-women and book-fellow organizations; of course neither the novels of Mrs. Babcock nor the poetry of C. T. Davis could be assigned literary rank, although I should grant passages of beauty to *The Soul* of Ann Rutledge, and C. T. Davis has in his poem-a-day stuff achieved now and then a line of pure lyricism.

The literary renaissance of the past decade has left Arkansas quite cold and I can find no indications of a cultural development. Finger writes in a letter to me that "Literary talent is as rare in Arkansas as it is in *Tierra del Fuego*." Finger should know for as editor of *All's Well* he has no doubt been swamped with manuscripts from literary ladies and budding poets, for the desire to get into print is just as rampant in Arkansas as it is in Kalamazoo. Which is not earnest of a cultural awakening. Just now there is not in Arkansas that unrest, that spiritual nostalgia which has been the well-spring for so much of the world's true art. A young poet wrote in a letter to me recently: "I doubt if I have quite enough chaos in me just now to demand that kind of setting to rights which is poetry." Arkansas has its industrial chaos, its political chaos, but not the chaos spoken of by the young poet. Arkansas is complacent, wallowing in the God's In His Heaven All's Right With The World philosophy. She has her 100 percent organizations, avid to assail all who would criticise, even though the criticism be offered in the kindest manner and be of the most salutary nature. Arkansans resent criticism. Arkansas is the Wonder State. All hail! Or all be damned. Grocers, insurance agents, state representatives, hardware merchants: patronize artists in Arkansas. Art is still a weakness. Poets were formerly referred to as "nuts"; to-day, they would be spoken of as "queer." That is the cultural development of Arkansas.

It is not greatly different with America. In glancing over the preceding paragraphs, I am impressed with the fact that except for specific references, I might have been writing of Texas, Iowa or Vermont, for in the standardization of Arkansas is the standardization of America. There is not in America a great deal of that chaos which demands the kind of setting to rights which is art. Truly, Arkansas are no more comical than Alabamans, Californians, or New Englanders . . .

HENRI FAUST

BOOK REVIEWS

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

DIONYSUS IN DOUBT, by *Edwin Arlington Robinson*. New York:
Macmillan Co. \$2.00.

Oh, for a poet — for a beacon bright
To rift this changeless glimmer of dead gray;
To spirit back the Muses, long astray,
And flush Parnassus with a newer light;
To put these little sonnet-men to flight
Who fashion, in a shrew mechanic way,
Songs without souls, that flicker for a day,
To vanish in irrevocable night.

What does it mean, this barren age of ours?
Here are the men, the women, and the flowers,
The seasons, and the sunset, as before.
What does it mean? Shall there not one arise
To wrench one banner from the western skies,
And mark it with his name forevermore?

The shift to the personal in the last line indicates that the poet was playing prophet to his dream; he has sought to make it actual in ten volumes. From the first his work is dominated by two interests, that have unequally stirred all American writers of today; applied more remotely in the beginning, they draw him closer home, until in this latest volume the poet is bound up wholly in near-by concerns.

With an increasing depth of psychological probing, Robinson has, like his fellow New Englander Eugene O'Neill, sought to lay bare the hidden impulses that stir below the surface of commonplace lives, to reveal the unacted tragedies that most men hide even from themselves. Richard Corey (1896), presents a man of all admired, who "one calm summer night went home and put a bullet through his head." Yet other portraits of the same period — Cliff Klingenhagen, Fleming Helphenstine — show Robinson wondering about an outward manifestation he does not venture to explain. But his second volume, six years later, constantly carries the search within, where it has ever since been followed. Always objective in these studies, the poet grows to resemble a dispassionate physician; in "The Man Who Died Twice" he pictures a fallen genius, a Salvation Army drummer, who while awaiting death reviews the almost eventless weakenings that have determined his fate. Masfield presents a drunkard in "The Everlasting Mercy," to which Robinson's poem bears resemblances in language and flow: a plain fellow who tears through a tumultuous spree — prize-fight, saloon brawl, fire alarm, maudlin lingering on the curb-stone — to an ecstasy

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of regeneration through the pure beauty of nature. The one is an externalized struggle, boisterously followed; the other an internal conflict viewed in retrospect. Masfield has us watch a living man endowed with hearty vitality. Robinson's skill, again as in the earlier harvest of Avon's fear and the recent calm revelation of an Electra complex in "Mortmain," seems bent to make us feel that what we listen to is not the outpouring of a living spirit, but rather the findings, scientifically cold, of a sort of psychological autopsy . . . There is no doubt as to the understanding of the coroner.

The second great impulse behind the work of Robinson is a deep concern for the welfare of the world. Utilizing the pagan mythology, he is in all else austere puritan: in his treatment of nature, which is scientific or rational rather than emotional; 1) especially in his hopes and efforts for future betterment, in his indignation at the present evil of the world. In one mood the youth (1896) exclaims "Life is the game that must be played!"; but this attitude, assumed in the exercise of a ballade, is but a fitting lightness across the sombre sense of futility that gives weight to the poems, and of the anguished wonder: "How long Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross?" This questioning of the world grows to a sense of common guilt and blindness (1910): "Down to our very nose's end

We see, and are invincible . . ." and six years later "none heeded and few heard" when a modern Cassandra called "Your dollar is your only word." Soon, however, the poet more boldly breaks from the common scramble of blind mouths, and speaks (in "Demos" 1920) as a warning prophet:

"All you that are enamoured of my name
And least intent on what I most require,
Beware; for my design and your desire
Deplorably, are not as yet the same."

Today we find a false god, in the stolen mask of Demos, ruling America, with only a mocking, half-amused Dionysus to dispute his eternal sway. Robinson, through the pagan god, urges a return to true puritan ideals²⁾ from their present distortion, lashing a land where fear, indifference, and expediency have wrung freedom into a gilded cage and equality into a shrewd Procrustean bed,

1) It is interesting to note that the poet is auditory rather than visual in his perceptive tendency; wherever possible he transmutes sight to sound:

*out of silence came
A song somewhat as of the morning stars...
And it was then that like a spoken word
Where there was none to speak, insensibly
A flash of blue that might have been a bird
Grew...
So great a silence there among the flowers
That even their fragrance had almost a sound;
An accusing voice of color... (all 1925)*

2) All ideals are puritan, in the wide connotation of the terms: "pagan," a living in the moment; "puritan," a regarding of the present as a period of preparation for some future, here or hereafter, ours or our descendants'.

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"When all are niched and ticketed and all
Are standardized and unexceptional,
To perpetrate complacency and joy
Of uniform size and strength; . . ."

"Dionysus in Doubt," though its complexities rob it of some measure of Jeremiad strength, is second only to "Processional," John Lawson's expressionistic play, as a flaying of contemporary American life.

Before he found himself at home in his personal and social analyses, Robinson drew naturally from the Arthurian legends and from Greek themes; for it was in these fields that he was gathering assurance as a poet. Although the sonnet seems his favorite form, his stern nature seldom builds it to more than a cold beauty; his intense compression often makes it obscure. He is, like Browning, whom he resembles in other respects as well, more at ease in blank verse, or in irregularly varied flowing rimes, or loose stanzas, that yield freedom to his shifts and sudden contrasts, that make room alike for his condensation and his expanding.

For the poet is at times compact in diction to the point of obscurity, and at times difficult because a smoke-screen of abounding words conceals a simple concept. A frequent device is the change from straightforward to involved statement in the middle of an idea:

"Of this or that thing or some other thing
That has a patent and intrinsic
Equivalence in those egregious shillings.. (1916)

If in the sorry picture that you flaunt
Before me as your ultimate panorama
Of an invertebrate futility
You see no reason to be sick at heart —
I do . . . (1925)

There are too many who stand
Erect and always amiable in error,
And always in accomodating terror
Before the glimmering imminence
Of too insistent a sincerity . . . (1925)

'I am a sowbug and a necrophile,'
Said Pretzel, 'and the gods are growing old;
The stars are singing Golden hair to gray,
Green leaf to yellow leaf,—or chlorophyl
To xanthophyl, to be more scintific, —
So speed me one more stein. You may believe
That I'm a mendicant, but I am not': (1902) "

"If I, meanwhile,

Appropriate the salvage of a smile" is one of those clever phrases one rejoices in achieving, but should be conscientious enough not to retain; nor is much more to be said for "the wonder of a sick despair
That waits upon a gullible undoing."

Perhaps because he is so cryptic or complex, Robinson pays the penance of repetition. This seems a conscious device, if we may accept his own phrases — "to fill again That weary sieve with wine . . . My darling, you have honored me three times In wishing that identical sweet wish—" yet the

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habit is none the less obstrusive. "A dog, for all I know, is what he needs," is followed shortly by "I don't know whether he needs a dog or not." If there be no definite repetition of the idea, it is often first broached on the principle that the longest way round is the sweetest way home — wherein poetry, though one of its accessories, differs from courtship. We find

"I had harmonized ingeniously
Some brief and unoffending cerebation

Which, had it been one, would have been a song;" to this the poet was not alluding when he employed the triple negative of "not impossibly not the last note . . ." leaving us to gather "the gist of what it means." It may well be this combination of obscurity and redundancy that maintains so limited a circle of readers for Robinson's work — and sustains him in high reputation.

For a closer examination of the poetry reveals that beneath this elaborate phrasing many of the characters and ideas are trivial. The epigrams he selects to translate from the Greek reveal this early tendency:

"The gloom of death is on the raven's wing,
The song of death is in the raven's cries:
But when Demophilus begins to sing,
The raven dies." (1896)

Many of the persons he pictures, — Miniver Cheevy, who kept on drinking (1910); many of his phrases — "Now for the love of heaven, dear Genevieve" (1925) — are of no especial account. Often, as does Shakspeare, he attempts to adorn the insignificant with a cloak of the sublime; but too frequently Robinson's garb is shoddy:

"The book of what you do not see, my friend,
Would have no Finis in it" (1925) is more stilted broadcloth than the homespun "What you don't know would fill a dozen books!"

"I'll be dying soon
Of common ordinary desperation
Unless you tell me . . ." (1925) is trudging verse; while the picture of Seneca Sprague's sparse hair "an atoll, as it were.

Circling a smooth lagoon of indignation," (1925) seems a misplaced and ponderous attempt at humor ¹⁾

At times, apparently in quest of verisimilitude (though the language of all the characters that speak is surprisingly like that of the poet himself) the diction simulates gutter-talk, seeking the vulgarly picturesque:

"You somewhat less than eminent dead fish . .
Why anyone in a world where there's a cockroach
Should care for you . . .
You crapulous and overgrown sick lump
Of failure and premeditated ruin,
What do you think you are—one of God's jokes? (1924)

1) Such comments tempt one to remark that though now he has but an atoll of hair, he will soon have no hair at all. These invitations should always be registered, then rejected.

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A dislocated and unlovely mess
For undertakers . . . " (1925) These not wholly unsuccessful lines indicate that there is a deliberate striving. Indeed, this sense of inconsequentiality seems aimed at in the very structure of some of the poems. The blank verse of "The Man Who Died Twice," for example, occasionally achieves the wave of the Miltonic line, rising to a crest, then with a dying fall; frequently it runs on it a thin rippling before the return. The effect is obtained by placing important or striking words in the middle of the line, opening and closing with words one would normally hurry by:

" . . . His leisure may affect. Seldom it is
The mightier moment of necessity
That we can see are coming come to us
As we have seen them. Better or worse for us,
Anticipation waits upon surprise . . . " (1924)

This intentional slurring over of ideas and words is, however, less usual than the poet's evident delight in the manipulation of the language, and his implicit summons to the reader to match his verbal play.

The pleasure one derives from reading Robinson is therefore intellectual rather than emotional; such beauty as he achieves is of a New England winter's day, when the icy coating of the snow crackles beneath brisk walkers, when trees are twisted skeletons of ice, and the sun breaks blindly across the fields. Without the warmth, he has the depth, compression, informality, obscurity of Browning; he is less a delight than a challenge: the pleasure springs from our mastery. We read on, discerning or divining through the words what thought, what feeling, he would convey; we are perhaps too involved in the process to note how aptly the poet has characterized himself:

"Talk? He is eldritch at it; and we listened—
Thereby acquiring much we knew before."

JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY

AN ENGLISH INTRODUCTION

GRACE AFTER MEAT. By John Crowe Ransom. With an introduction by Robert Graves. Printed and published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press. London.

It has happened before, and apparently is happening again, that an English critic has given a high valuation to an American poet's work before his own countrymen in America recognized him with full adequacy. Robert Graves has for some time been an unreserved admirer of John Crowe Ransom's poetry; and now he stands as sponsor for Mr. Ransom in a volume of twenty poems, published in England and selected by Mr. Graves from *Poems About God* (Henry Holt and Company: 1919) and Mr. Ransom's later work. In this sponsorship, Mr. Graves states, T. S. Eliot

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has concurred and assisted.

The favorable reception which Mr. Ransom's *Chills and Fever* (Knopf: 1924) is getting in America is evidence that Americans are not quite so tardy in recognizing a new poet as they have been in former years; yet Mr. Graves has done a very valuable service in editing the present volume. It is as excellent an introduction to the poetry of John Crowe Ransom as could be desired. From the earlier volume (so strangely unremarked by American critics) a selection is made which emphasizes the permanent values in that more or less experimental book and which ought to help to bring it into a new and deserved focus of interest. And from *Chills and Fever* the selection is quite satisfactory in that it gives excellent characteristic specimens of Mr. Ransom's maturer poetry, though it hardly conveys an adequate impression of his range and variety.

But in attempting to derive Mr. Ransom's poetry from considerations of environment, Mr. Graves would seem to be assuming a quite unnecessary and even a dangerous handicap. He discovers a slight affinity between Ransom and Robert Frost. "In their manner," he says, "we find an extremely fastidious art disguised by colloquialisms and a pretence of 'every-which-way' (to borrow Frost's own word). In their matter, we discover both poets acting spokesmen for those rebellious 'poor whites' (in the political and plutocratic sense) who find the narrow puritanism of their fathers not enough for their needs, and turning sceptic, at first with violence, are beginning to adopt a new religion of nature-worship and toleration of their fellows. Neither Frost nor Ransom had any local poetic tradition on which to build and had each to evolve his own." And further on we read, "Ransom, then, is doing for his own state what Frost has done for New England, Vachel Lindsay, for his Middle-West, and Carl Sandburg for Chicago."

The error Mr. Graves has made (re-inforced by his recent comments in the *Saturday Review*) is that he has sought to derive John Crowe Ransom from an environment without any accurate knowledge as to what that environment is. The volume *Poems About God* is a dramatic collation of the varieties of aspect in which the divinity makes his appearance to men; and though the book happens to be rich in "local color", Mr. Graves is not altogether right in identifying the poet's sentiments with those of his characters. Furthermore, to those who know Mr. Ransom, it is a bit absurd to think of him as "acting spokesman for rebellious 'poor whites'" in any sort of sense, or as doing the interpreter stunt for Tennessee as the other poets he names have done it for their sections.

The truth is that "local color" is so far from being the dominant characteristic of Mr. Ransom and those associated with him in the publication of *The Fugitive* that he and the others have been assailed or even completely scorned for the very lack of that quality which Mr. Graves so magnifies. And the most thoughtful estimates by American reviewers would indicate that consciousness of scene is hardly worth mentioning in any discussion of Fugitive poetry.

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Mr. Graves' collection, then, by juxtaposing a certain number of poems (nearly always the earlier ones) which seem to bear out his thesis, is somewhat misleading readers, and over-emphasizing a point that is at most a minor one. I do not wish to cast the slightest reflection on Mr. Graves' good will; it is evident that he is honestly trying to present Mr. Ransom's poetry in a most favorable aspect. He is to be complimented for his pioneering courage and discernment. But neither he nor any other critic that I know has faced squarely the critical problem of interpretation and analysis of this poet's work.

Perhaps the problem requires a fairer perspective (and certainly more space) than I can claim at present. But I certainly believe that Mr. Ransom's poetry is "pure poetry" in the sense that environment and immediate experience bear only the merest incidental relation to it; that, in a time when poetry has tended to become inflexible, petty, fragmentary, he has loosened the bonds by the treatment of themes ranging all the way from the humorous to the metaphysical, and by a technique which, while it uses apparently conventional forms, makes them fluid and elastic under his deft and bold touch; that his intellectual fibre, coupled with his surprising personal idiom, makes him already distinguished in the American scene, where only Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, and Wallace Stevens, perhaps, can lay claim to a similarly sturdy substance.

DONALD DAVIDSON

THE NEW SYNTHETIC HISTORY

THE NEW HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES. *By Harry Elmer Barnes, Prof. of Social and Economic Institutions, Amherst College* New York: 1925: The Century Co., \$3.50.

Historiography has in the past been confined either to a mere recital of interesting and exciting episodes or to a discussion of political and military events. The first gave rise to the chronicle which dealt, in a gossippy fashion, with dynastic intrigues or the scandalous behaviour of the various courts; the second — to the monumental histories of Freeman and Treitschke, Sybel and Droysen. Forty years ago, John Richard Green revolted against this convention and undertook to write "a history, not of English Kings or English Conquests, but of the English People." His was, however, a voice in the wilderness. History has tended primarily "to be concerned with the narration of meaningless names of potentates and battles, the recitation of political events, and rehearsal of romantic and striking episodes which have had little or no significance in the historical development of humanity and culture." Prof. Barnes does not entirely condemn the political school of historians. He admits "that it was political history which gave modern his-

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toriography its accurate methods of research and provided it with its vast compilations of primary sources." Indeed, so intent was this school upon the development of an appropriate methodology that it overlooked almost entirely the importance of evaluating the facts it unearthed. "Instead of attempting to grasp and describe the whole current of human progress, they merely seized upon the most conspicuous chip on the surface of the waters and thus obscured and distorted the whole picture of human development."

The dominant interests and preoccupations of every age is expressed in the historiography of that period. The historians of Mediaeval Europe were chiefly engulfed in the ecclesiastical and religious interests which for centuries dominated the minds of educated Europeans. Again, the awakening of nationalism and the rise of the modern state found their chief expression in the political histories of Seeley and Freeman, Sybel and Treitschke. Ours is a more complex period. The economic influences of the Industrial Revolution, the rise into importance of the new social sciences, the remarkable progress in mechanics, and the increase in inventions — all these have revolutionized and transformed the very basis of our present civilization, and have changed the scope and purpose of modern historiography. A new history is being evolved whose purpose is "to give the present generation such a complete and reliable picture of the past that it will be able to arrive at an intelligent comprehension of how and why the present state of civilization came about.", and whose scope is wide enough "to take into account the sum total of human achievement." This attitude has considerably enlarged the present field of historical investigation. (1) Modern history deals with a greater variety of human interests and activities, and lays greater emphasis upon the economic and social factors in cultural development. (2) Archeology and Anthropology have added to our knowledge of primitive society and have pushed back the date of man's antiquity. We can no longer apply the term "pre-historic" to the ancient cliff or lake dwellers, since today we know more about them and their state of culture than about some historical peoples. (3) Modern history has expanded beyond the boundaries of Europe and America, and is giving due weight to "extra-European influences." As Prof. Barnes points out it is a hopeless anachronism to study the history of a particular country without considering the external influences that helped to shape the course of its development. Because of the wider scope and greater inclusiveness of modern history, the historian of the future will find it necessary to approach his chosen field with a more comprehensive knowledge of what has been contributed by the sister-sciences.

"The direct and indispensable relationship of history to the other social studies is obvious." Prof. Barnes takes every opportunity to emphasize this relationship, for this is the principal leit-motif of his exposition. He has devoted the greater part of his book to a summary of the contributions made by the social sciences and to an analysis of their influence upon the development of the New Synthetic History. A student of political economy, I find much to criticize in the chapter that deals with economics and its relations to history. It seems to me that Dr. Barnes fails to appreciate the Classical

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School and its contributions to economic theory. There is not a single reference in this chapter to the truly monumental work of Alfred Marshall. Prof. E. Cannan is only given space in a footnote, and no mention is made of the contributions to economic history by Prof. Unwin and his disciples at Manchester University. But this is detail, and does not detract from the strength of his main thesis.

HERMAN SILVERMAN

INDIAN LOGIC

INDIAN LOGIC AND ATONISM, and *Exposition of the Nyaya and Vaicesika Systems*, by Arthur Berriedale Keith. New York: Oxford University Press. \$3.85.

The problem of logic, of its real meaning and evolution is one of the most troubling in modern philosophy. It becomes, to a certain extent, the pivot of our disquisitions. Just as, in the second half of the past century, all philosophy seemed to dissolve into psychology — influence of Darwinism and the historic school — the trend of contemporaneous thought is verging toward Logic. It is the new predominance of Mathematics — Mathematics conceived as a peculiar kind of logical expression — which brought about this attitude. For this reason I am digging out from all the rich material contained in this learned volume, compiled with such diligence and accuracy from all the Indian sources available, by the distinguished Indologist Professor A. B. Keith, a volume which treats the philosophy of Spirit of Nature, of Man and Universe, as expounded by the two greatest thinkers of old India — Gautama (the Nyaya School) and Kanada (the Vaicesika School) — only one point: the theory of the syllogism.

Enthusiastic Indologists, like Sir William Jones or Dr. Ballantyne, Lassen, Schroeder and others are eager to draw comparisons between Greek and Hindoo philosophy, and to show their interdependence, or even the influence of India upon Occidental thought. Sound and cool students of Indian philology, like Ram Chandra Bose, or Garbe, have shown that this interdependence does not exist, that the Oriental, the Indian mind is utterly strange to the Occidental ways of thought, that East and West are working on different planes. Professor Keith does not — and this is one of the best qualities of his work — indulge in comparisons and parallelisms. He limits himself to the exposition of the texts of Indian lore, as it is conserved in the difficult "Sutras" of the disciples of Gautama and Kanada, in the meagre text and the enormous collections of comments.

The gist of the logical theory of India lies in the idea of Concomitance. ("Vyapti") That means — no object can be conceived without a certain quality. Hence, in order to find the quality of a given object, we have to find out the quality of a similar. Thus, the process of reasoning is

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limited to an enumeration and to a comparison. The Greek idea of the class, i. e. the subsuming of the particular under a general principle is ignored. We see it best in the original Indian forms of the syllogism, the classical five-membered syllogism of Gautama. "The hill is fiery—because it has smoke—whatever is smoky is fiery, like a kitchen—so is this hill smoky — therefore is the hill fiery." This syllogism does not bring new results, does not synthetize, does not subsume the isolated facts under a general rule, as the Aristotelian three-membered syllogism. The Greek syllogism would say: "Everything that is smoky is fiery—the hill is smoky—therefore . . ." Gautama does not admit the "Everything." He merely says: A kitchen is smoky because it is fiery, a hill is just an object like a kitchen—therefore, it is also fiery. It is not a deduction, but merely an abridged induction, an inference. He discards the general principle. Even in the further development of this doctrine the syllogism preserves the original stamp: The hill is fiery, because of smoke, where there is smoke there is fire, as in a kitchen, where there is no smoke there is no fire —

And so is this (hill).

Therefore it is so (fiery).

Professor Keith ascribes this form of Indian syllogism to the nature of the Sanscrit language. "The subject is capable of wide expression, thanks to the power of the language; where a thing is not a convenient subject, — a place or time may be converted into one." (p. 125). But it seems to me that the relation ought to be inverted. Language is an instrument of Logic, and is ruled by its laws. It is erroneous to think — as many do — that the Aristotelian logic is merely a set of formulas of and for the Greek grammar. It would be just as if we would say that Raymond Lull's logic was a mirror of the Spanish language, or that Bacon gave merely a theory of English. Grammar is Logic. It is the structural form of the language. Therefore to explain logic by language means *idem per idem*.

Sir Bose (in his lucid book on "Hindu Philosophy") struck the light note when he pointed out the fact that the Indian logicians did not attack the same importance to the syllogism — as Aristotle did, although they did not minimize it as Mill. Their ways of thought were different. The fundamental idea of the Occidental mind is connection, the Indian, the Oriental idea is concomitance. In a more general expression: The Indian logic reflects the attitude of Undistinctiveness and One-ness of the World, the Greek idea was Individualization. This is not the place to indulge more widely upon this important point. Hegel tried — in his Logic — to discuss this problem. But, aside from his erroneous "idée maitresse" he lacked the detailed knowledge of the various logical doctrines, especially of the Oriental. And he failed to understand the essentials of the problem of Indian logic. The work of Prof. Keith, together with many others on Indian logic, the profound disquisition of Levy-Bruehl, of Tannery, of Milhaud on the Occidental, especially Greek Logic and Mathematics, the studies of Prof. Schwarz on the Talmudic Logic, paved the way for a new theory of Logic, a theory which should cover the wide range from Nuaya to Logos.

A. CORALNIK

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY: A CRITICAL STUDY. By J. Middleton Murry. Boston: Small, Maynard and Co. \$3.50. — This is a reprint of Mr. Murry's first book, published in 1916. It is one of the two important studies in English of Dostoevsky (the other being *Dostoevsky and His Creation* by Janko Lavrin) and it is the threshold that must be crossed before one can reach a correct understanding of the present outlook of perhaps the most important critic in England. Mr. Murry has the "passion to know" and this fits him admirably to penetrate Dostoevsky's mind.

The most noteworthy points in his argument are his proofs that Dostoevsky deliberately set out to annihilate the sense of time in his writing and his proofs that the great heroes of these novels are incarnations of powerful abstract ideas. After the relentless working out of many problems, Dostoevsky created the reconciling figure in Alyosha (*The Brothers Karamazov*), whom Mr. Murry describes as follows:

"This Alyosha, the resolute champion, is not a Christian. He has passed beyond the Christian revelation. He is not Myshkin, but Myshkin went to his making, so did Stavrogin, and his brothers and his father. He is that in which their agonies should be justified. He may not believe in God, he may know himself for a sensualist, yet he is not confounded, for his knowledge of the great Oneness needs no belief in God for its support, and the beast which he knows within him is no more a beast. He has transcended these sublunary things. Their names are but earthly and blunted symbols for the reality which bears within him. He is fair and comely; his outward bears the impress of his inward harmony; his body and his spirit together are modulated by the sweet music of other worlds. He is the man who is the promise of all humanity, for whom the old problems are solved by his very being and are not."

'There is the gold of a Renaissance in Dostoevsky and Mr. Murry has a few grains himself. Those who are interested in the general problem of a modern cultural rebirth must take account of them, but the account must be very critical, for both writers often mistake states of feeling for states of *consciousness*, as the quoted passage testifies.

G. B. M.

POETS OF AMERICA, by Clement Wood. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., \$2.00.—

The most interesting part of Mr. Wood's pretentious and vulgar book on American poetry is entirely beyond the book itself; the interest one feels is extrinsic. No more significant commentary on the present state of American criticism could be imagined; for nowhere else in the lettered world could such a volume be taken seriously enough by a publisher to be issued, and nowhere else could it offer so good an opportunity to a New York Times to display the degradation of American journalism by taking Mr. Wood's contentions seriously. Mr. Wood is oratorical, hortatory, intolerant of good poetry (as if for some damning reason he bore it a

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grudge), discriminatory with infallibly bad taste in order to support the current profound hatred of literature in the masses; so deeply sentimental that he not once achieves precision of expression or evinces the vaguest understanding of those "intellectualists" whom he presumes to condemn. Mr. Wood is the great Democrat, the William Jennings Bryan, of American literature; and like Mr. Bryan he panders (sincerely enough, unfortunately) to the prejudices permanently latent in the mob. Like Mr. Bryan, again, he is monstrosly egotistical and grotesquely ignorant, without capacity for receiving information in opposition to his own bigotry. His "discovery", the forgotten Adah Isaacs Menken, has always been remembered by the curious for certain ludicrous qualities of bathos, for unconsciously humorous verse: Mr. S. Foster Damon, at least ten years ago, was entertaining his friends with bits of her "interesting" poetry. And it is significant that the only line Mr. Wood quotes from her work which isn't hopelessly mawkish is the only line he condemns. Altogether, one tries hard and almost fails — but not quite, for criticism almost as bad was written about Shakespeare by the Eighteenth century Mr. Dennis; but never before or since.

A. T.

THE INDEPENDENT POETRY ANTHOLOGY, 1925; *unedited; introduction by E. Ralph Cheney*. New York: Privately Printed. \$1.50. — If Mr. Clement Wood's Poets of America stand for a certain critical attitude of the Democracy, then this anthology represents the fruition of that attitude in practice. "I claim," writes Mr. Cheney in his Introduction, "poetic conceptions of genuine worth are often contained in poems the technique of which bars them from publication in any magazine or anthology now existent." Thus, the anthology is a collection of inspirations and is quite as trivial and uninteresting as garbled inspiration usually shows itself to be. But every Democracy (we venture the platitude in order to exemplify without excessive quotation the quality of bromide Mr. Cheney exhibits in his introductory rumination) — every Democracy affords specimens of intelligence; and this book affords the reader a few decent poems. Mr. Wolf, Miss Taggard, Mr. Ramon Guthrie have elsewhere written interesting verse; they have written respectable verse here. And it is too bad that Mr. Harry Alan Potamkin didn't print his two poems elsewhere, or others along with these so that the reader could actually get at his difficult and interesting work. "There are greater implications, you see, in this anthology than may be apparent at the first casual glance," says Mr. Cheney. We doubt it, but if there are we hope not.

A. T.

HESPERIDES, by *Ridgely Torrence*. New York: The Macmillan Co., \$1.75. — "An outside dance in shadows, an inside dance in flame." These poems dance with the dual harmony of manner and mood. Sentimentality is the author's imminent foe, but he fights valiantly when he wields the sword of concision. The stanzaic forms shift as in the wind the edge of a forest moves its dark shade across the fields — though Spenser should have taught the poet that the lengthened last line averts the couplet snap. Lone couplets, as in the well known "Eye Witness," he handles skilfully. Only an occasional monotony of rhythm, as in "Santa Barbara Beach," does penance for his faith in the classical tradition.

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

The years through which these poems have grown bring some of them recurrently familiar: the clipped patches of "The Son," the iterate strength of the lynching poem "The Bird and the Tree." "Three O'Clock" presses a modern attitude into an old form, that ticks to relentless sentimentality:

*The lights go out in red and gold,
But time goes out in gray.*

In general, Mr. Torrence presents work with merit inversely proportioned to its length; and while we would not have this value sought at its logical extreme, we recognize his wisdom in publishing scantily and slowly. Brevity is a fair trap for beauty Mr. Torrence is learning to set.

J. T. S.

THE GUARDSMAN, by *Franz Molnar*. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$2.00. —

Clever play with the foils, thrust and parry to hold the interest keen, but a sense of the game throughout: the buttons are on. A jealous actor playing a part to test his wife; she succumbs to the interesting stranger — then nonchalantly declares she had known her husband all along. Sharp-pronged dilemma of jealousy and professional pride: is he a cuckold, or a ham? Continental suavity is the still pool wherein the fires gleam, flickering reflections of emotion. The critic friend has a quietly caustic humor that crosses broadswords in the secondary bout with the actress's violent "Mamma," who is the most interesting creation in a play that offers slight but sophisticate entertainment.

J. T. S.

THE BOOKPLATE ANNUAL FOR 1925, edited by *Alfred Fowler*. Kansas City:

Alfred Fowler. \$5.00—Mr. Fowler has here produced a work of splendid format and adequate contents, a work entirely tasteful in its selection and placing of the bookplates, a true artist's disregard for "waste" (of white space) for the sake of the precise proportion. The work is evidence of a labor of love.

POEMS FOR YOUTH, an *American Anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

\$3.00. — This anthology of Mr. Benet's for Americans in their teens ought to do something to acquaint young Americans with the fact that not all American poetry is the work of dead men who wore long beards. As a whole, the book is sensibly organized, although one may think some of the prefatory notes a trifle sentimental, uncritical or unwise or some of the selections too careless. Some of the notes will prove too esoteric, as will some of the poetry, too far removed from the understanding of young readers. Such an anthology is valuable more as an antidote than as a positive contribution. If there were no high-school and college classes in English there would be no need for such an antidote. And such an antidote can be only fractional (and minutely so) in its cure — or, who knows, it may call for another antidote to work against it.

GEORGIAN STORIES OF 1925. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. — There is no story of unusual distinction in this collection. It has the stamp of unreliability, of unauthoritative selection. Sitwell writes well enough but for the sake of a last line.

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

Of all, perhaps Jesse's is the most thorough story, although the theme is hardly fresh. Mitchison writes charmingly an unimportant tale. Forster writes in the vein — but not with the skill — of *The Celestial Omnibus*. Huxley contributes a story with absolutely no reason for existence. But worst of all is the cheap, unscrupulous opening story of Arlen — a padded anecdote which has been circulated for years at every table or cuspidor about which men (and women too undoubtedly) gather. Where was A. E. Coppard during this period?

THIS MAD IDEAL, by *Floyd Dell*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00 — Floyd Dell wrote "Moon-Calf". One who had not read his "Were You Ever a Child?" might have believed he would eventually write a story not completely realised. Of course, had one read Waldo Frank's "The Unwelcome Man" before reading "Moon-Calf", one might by the comparison have had additional doubts upon Mr. Dell. His characters were not made of nervous systems and functioning bodies; they were contours. In writing "Janet March," the author may have detected his fault, but the result there was only a more meticulously charted contour map. In "This Mad Ideal" there are not even contour maps, for even profiles have characteristics.

GOD OF MIGHT, by *Elias Tobenkin*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company. — Mr. Tobenkin's novel is a study of a Jew who failed to achieve the social equality he desired because he would not cease being a Jew. The author presents and controls the problem with skill, but the spiritual struggle of his protagonist is depicted not as it evolves from within but as it manifests itself outwardly. The style is able and with a degree of verve, but lacking in penetration and intensity.

JUDAS, by *T. Sturge Moore*, Chicago: Covici — McGee. — The cover designs for "Judas" is, undoubtedly, the author's own: it has the casual, quiet irony, the profound intelligence, the imaginative luminousness of Moore's poetry. And it summarizes the poem: that Judas is Jesus; that only a turn of a thread has made him the less favored. Moore, for all his classic strength, is a modern. His flexible, resilient blank verse, so serenely sure of its draft, contains devices of word and thought that are inescapably contemporary. In the seeming fixedness of each sound, of each word — in their apparent inevitability — there is a boldness and a passion to shudder vice-crusaders into action, could vice-crusaders comprehend.

MEMORANDA

(In my not very casual Excursions I sought to establish for myself approaches to the Big Show — avenues, if not a summary of the Scene. They were therefore never Excursions, but Notes on the Journey, a diary of estimates, by necessity fragmentary. And so, recognizing their character, I allow them no more than that. They are notes, they are virtually "Memoranda". But Memoranda have the potentiality of becoming a Synthesis, and therefore they deserve the courtesy of consideration.)

* * * *

Mr. Gorham B. Munson has done a necessary and notable work in his reintroduction of Robert J. Coady to the American reader.¹⁾ At this moment, three writers within the columns of one weekly journal dwell upon the popular and "livelier" aspects of American expression.²⁾ But Coady was more essentially attuned, his was definitely an entire response to the bolder manifestations of America. The three gentlemen of today appear entirely too weathercockish to be authentic. Of the three Mr. Seldes is perhaps the most capable, he has the most gifted "nose for news," but he is more unrelated to the material than was the "ravenous" Coady. Mr. Wilson, the most efficient reviewer in America, must tangent to enter into the tustle; while Mr. Littell is altogether too effete for the vulgar job. Heartiness was all with Coady; his was no fingertip contact, but one ecstatic and desperate.

* * * *

Whatever the qualifications of the more ardent, less ardent, American critic for the job of "seeing America first," it is splendid enough an indication of a self-consciousness that must create for itself a pattern. But until there is a conversion of material there is no art. Coady called for the artist to convert the materials of his environment into the forms of art. Did Coady confound the shell with the spirit? I am afraid he did. He was overeager to swallow his environment without mastication.

* * * *

The most demanding of contemporary presences is the Machine. It is unavoidable. The contemporary artist must, in all integrity, reckon with it, decide upon his relations to it. Enrico Prampolini,³⁾ Futurist, exalts the

1) "The Skyscraper Primitives," by Gorham B. Munson, *The Guardian*, March 1925. "Three Unpublished Letters," by Robert J. Coady, *The Guardian*, August 1925.

2) Messrs. Gilbert Seldes, Edmund Wilson and Robert Littell in *The New Republic*.

3) "The Aesthetic of the Machine and Mechanical Introspection in Art," by Enrico Prampolini, *The Little Review*, Autumn 1924—Winter 1925 number. (Also *The Broom*, October 1922).

MEMORANDA

Machine as "the new mythical deity which weaves the legends and histories of the contemporary human drama." A Machine-worship you see. "The artist can pin his faith only to the realities contingent on his own life or to those elements of expression which spiritualize the atmosphere he breathes." But, he proclaims: "The plastic exaltation of The Machine and the mechanical elements must not be conceived in their exterior reality, that is in formal representations of the elements which make up The Machine itself, but rather in the plastic-mechanical analogy that The Machine suggests to us in connection with various spiritual realities." Is The Machine All of modern life?

* * * *

Mistake not, O mortal, Explosion for Power!

* * * *

"Art is determined by the voltage of its synthesis."¹)

* * * *

John Howard Lawson²) exploits the implications of common speech and reveals more than a primary concept of the demands of language in writing. He condenses admirably and amplifies without inflation. He has a fine sense of "the right moment" and placement, and is adventurous. These are basic qualities for an artist, but they are important only if they are built upon. And Mr. Lawson appears too haphazard in his choice of method and material. In "Roger Bloomer," Mr. Lawson, by such indication as capturing thoughts into fragmentary phrases, is seeking a re-rendering of the American scene. Yet the final effect here is not different from that of the sentimental tragedy. And this simply because the material — "wandering Boy," "little Girl in a big City" — has not been fully studied to determine the method of handling. Mr. Lawson's attitude is a sentimentality shifting into satire weakened by the absence of a satirical method. In "Processional," apart from the wrong shunting of motif against setting, there is a misunderstanding of medium. Instead of manipulating burlesk concepts to fit into the strictures of a complete mould, Lawson burlesques burlesk, the result being, of course, just another burlesk, which is not what he is after. There are not sufficient modifications to contribute new American characters. There must be "conversion of material" to render the material dramatic. There is such conversion in the capture of the miner on the spike of a fence, his trouser-seat his betrayer. Here is the grotesque suddenly ironic, burlesk material suddenly tragic. Mr. Lawson is an important figure, in a sense a prophecy, a dramatist aiming to synthesize the American manifestation into a dramatic whole.

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1) "Abstraction and Time in Music," by George Antheil, *The Little Review*, 1924-1925.

2) *Roger Bloomer... Processional*, by John Howard Lawson, New York: Thomas Seltzer, \$2.00.

MEMORANDA

Amid the tumult of establishing one's national identity, there are writers surely of their time who evince no external violences that would label them American. But modern they are in their synthetic consciousness, and finally by such test they are universal. Among the young men is one timorous and not always successful; in fact one who must be accepted for his faults, rather than despite them. Mr. H. S. Baron³⁾ concerns himself in this instance with the stratification of unrealized experience, with the process and consequences of unfulfillment. It is a very delicate task he has chosen for himself, and one requiring a nimbleness which he does not always command. He must get at the bottommost stratum of his protagonist and, like a surgeon, quickly and skilfully accomplish his operation. He must use a drastic minimum of strokes. Therefore, if he be earnest, he is liable to be awkward. In this case, his awkwardness, while it does not prove ultimate skill, proves a basic concern for his task. Mr. Baron is furthermore courageous in not exploiting the violences that offer themselves, and attains the tragic in quietude.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

3) Barbara, by H. S. Baron, Boston: The Stratford Company. \$1.50.

ART

ERNEST FIENE

A whole-hearted acceptance of nature as the chief source of his art has enabled Ernest Fiene to escape the sterility of the abstractionists and the determinedly naive, allowing him to create a synthesis from the elements of life which though it might be termed realistic is in no sense literal. It does succeed in satisfying in the spectator a deeper sense of reality.

The successful projection of such an attitude necessitates a real capacity for emotion in the artist and it is this emotional intensity that Mr. Fiene possesses to a marked degree. Naturally with such a temperamental bias his work would show his reliance upon instinct rather than upon intellect. Whatever theories he may possess he evidently finds of little importance unless they have evolved from his own apprehension of life; there is slight evidence of an attempt to impose upon nature a pre-conceived design. As a matter of fact, his form seems inseparable from the substance, and while no doubt he possesses quite definite ideas upon the subject of aesthetics, it is plain that his is a theory of art and not an art of theory.

However rare, emotional intensity alone is not sufficient in the creation of a work of art; this experience must be transformed into an organized whole and stated in the terms of the artistic medium, which in the case of the painter are line, form, color, etc. Upon the justness of the use of these elements depends the excellence of his style.

While Mr. Fiene's style has changed considerably during the past few years its underlying qualities have remained largely the same inasmuch as through it all runs a strong personal rhythm. His one-man show at the New Gallery in New York last fall clearly exposed the change in the outward aspect of his work while definitely establishing its essential personal qualities. In this exhibition paintings produced during a period of five or six years hung side by side and while at first glance the robust and striking appearance of his earlier work seemed to display more strength than did his later painting, a closer examination showed that that earlier strength was due to an emphasis on dramatic effect, a result of youthful exuberance, rather than to the controlled power evident in his later work which is directed towards a greater penetration and understanding of nature. It was apparent, too, that the change of emphasis had called into being a greater coherency and subtlety of style.

All his work is animated by a candid joy in the whole of life; he is not afraid of the descriptive element, fusing it into an organic whole by a strong sense of composition which he invariably organizes into spatial relationships, the color and design governed more often by the subject and the form than by a purely decorative scheme. He shows always a great

ART — ERNEST FIENE

respect for the quality of pigment and displays considerable dexterity in its use.

It is not surprising that his vitality and his interest in all manifestations of life should demand the use of many mediums for their expression. Oil, watercolor, pen, crayon and etching are turned to account as vehicles for a great diversity of subject matter. While it happens that the bulk of his work has been in landscape, he has examples to his credit of still life, figure and portraiture. His portraits are straightforward characterizations, objective in point of view, attaining an aesthetic significance by structural harmony and unity of design. In drawing, his line is supple and rhythmic, conveying a sensation of form — the test of all good drawing. No matter what medium — watercolor, oil or line — his work is never fragmentary but is always complete in itself and is ever imbued with something of his personality — his vitality and intensity of emotion.

HERMON MORE.